The Teaching Values of the Old Testament

BY
REV. WALTER W. MOORE, D. D.
AND
REV. EDWARD MACK, D. D.

GENERAL UNIT—NUMBER FIVE
TEN LESSONS

STANDARD TRAINING COURSE

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this course are based on outlines adopted by the International Council of Religious Education

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(Continued on third cover page.)

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TEACHING VALUES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

LESSON I.

The Land and the Book

1. Broadly speaking, we find in the Old Testament three classes of contents: first, an account of the origin, historical development and peculiar character of the chosen people as a community, and of their sacred institutions; secondly, an account of the successive divine communications to Israel through the agency of the prophets; and thirdly, a collection of lyrics, proverbs, and other products of religious emotion and reflection, which embody the response of the regenerate heart and life to the revelation of God's character and will. Accordingly the ancient Jews divided the books of their canon into three great classes which they called respectively The Law, The Prophets, and The Hagiographa or Holy Writings. Thus the three outstanding literary forms are History, Oratory and Poetry.

The Palestinian Atmosphere of the Bible

2. One thing these different literary forms have in common. They are all pervaded by a distinctive local atmosphere. They all teem with images drawn from a land that is unique in its location and its structure. Therefore a thorough knowledge of the physical features of this land is an indispensable qualification for the effective teaching of any part of the Old Testament. These physical features have largely determined the very dialect of revealed religion. "Like other books, the Bible has had a home, a birthplace; but beyond all other examples, this birthplace has given form and color to its language." In a preeminent degree the phraseology and imagery of the Bible reflect

the character of the country in which it was written and the customs of the people among whom it arose. Therefore to learn the land and life of ancient Israel is to apprehend the whole setting of revealed truth and to appreciate the force of a multitude of metaphors and allusions which will otherwise be without meaning. The Land and the Book "answer to one another like the two parts of an indenture." To lay a sure substructure for the teacher of the Old Testament, therefore, the first step is a thorough knowledge of the geography of Palestine.

Relation of the Land to God's Redemptive Purpose

3. More important still is the teacher's apprehension of the relation of the land to God's redemptive purpose. The study of Palestine is not only essential to an intelligent appreciation of Biblical forms of statement and of the surface facts of Biblical history, but it is necessary also to a full understanding of the inner relation of those facts to each other as parts of one divine purpose and stages in one divine revelation, unfolded gradually through hundreds of years and culminating in a universal religion. The Land of Promise was preconfigured to its history. It was through the characteristics of the country that God effected the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham that in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed. By its location and structure it was adapted as no other country on earth was to God's purpose of preparing a pure religion through centuries of separation, and then of publishing that religion to the whole world.

In order to the accomplishment of these ends three things were necessary:

(1) A single nation had to be chosen as the special depository of divine truth, and this nation had to be separated

from all other nations in order that this truth might be preserved and developed in its purity.

This isolation of Israel was secured by natural barriers of desert, river, sea and mountain.

(2) This nation had to be set in the center of the world, so that when the fulness of time was come the saving truth which it possessed might be most easily published to all mankind.

Palestine was central. It was the focal point of the ancient world. It commanded access to the three great continents, Europe, Asia and Africa. It stood in the midst of the nations of antiquity. It was therefore fitted as no other land was, to be the radiating center of a universal religion.

(3) The record of the truth thus prepared had to be such as would fit it for world-wide dissemination; that is to say, the book which contained this revelation had to be a universal book, not local or sectional, but possessing such a range of imagery and style as would make it easily understood by men of every race in every land. It must not only speak to the universal heart of man by its essential truth but must also have such characteristics of form as would adapt it to the ready understanding of all men in all lands.

The structure of Palestine fitted it preeminently to produce such a book. It was a very small country, yet its extraordinary differences of elevation, from Mt. Hermon, 9,200 ft. above the Mediterranean, to the Dead Sea, 1,292 ft. below; its corresponding differences of climate, from alpine cold to torrid heat; its amazing variety of animal and vegetable life, representing widely separated zones—make it a sort of epitome of the whole earth. It is the world in a nutshell. "Accordingly the illustrations drawn from nature, with which the Bible abounds, are suited to

all climes and understood by all men." They are all at home amid the imagery of Scripture. It is the world's book.

The Natural Divisions of the Land

4. Having thus endeavored to stimulate the student's interest by pointing out the influence of the land on the literary forms of the Old Testament and its relation to the outworking of God's great plan, the teacher, in proceeding to the actual handling of the geographical materials, will find the best distribution of the subject in the *Natural Divisions* of the country. Palestine consists of four strips of territory running parallel to each other North and South. Two of these strips are elevations and two of them depressions, and the elevations and depressions alternate. Thus, beginning on the West, we have the lowland lying along the Mediterranean Sea. Then, just back of that to the East, we have a tumbled and broken ridge rising to an altitude of 3,000 feet. Still farther to the East we have the extraordinary depression through which flows the Jordan. And finally we have the elevated table land lying between the Jordan and the Eastern Desert.

In dealing with these divisions in detail let the teacher show in the case of the more important sites in each section how the localities and the events dovetail. Make vivid use of the Story. Help the student to hear through the land "the sound of running history."

The Mediterranean Plain, a Highway

5. The *Maritime Plain*, level or gently undulating, and open at both ends, was the Bridge between Asia and Africa. It was traversed by highways along which the caravans and armies of the two continents passed to and fro. And here we find its real contribution to the history of Israel.

By the trunk road through this plain the Philistines came up to the overthrow of Saul at Mt. Gilboa. Along this road the Jews saw the armies of Tiglath-Pileser, Shalmaneser, Sargon, Sennacherib, Pharaoh-Necho and Nebuchadnezzar pass. It was the world's highway.

The most striking feature of the coast line is that it has no good harbor. The Hebrews had no word for harbor. They did not have the thing, and therefore did not need the name. To them the sea was a barrier and not a highway. That long line of sand, unbroken by any deep indentation, cut Israel off almost entirely from water communication with the western world. Seclusion is the dominant idea in the Old Testament, but Expansion in the New. When God's time came He raised up a man who was His unconscious instrument for the breaking of a gateway through which the Gospel should go forth to the West; Herod the Great for the first time in history built a real harbor for Palestine at Caesarea. Thence the great Apostle of the Gentiles went forth with the Gospel to the Western world.

The Story: Joppa—Jonah (Jon. 1:3), timber from Lebanon (II Chron. 2:16, Ezra 3:7).

THE PLAIN OF ESDRAELON, HIGHWAY AND BATTLEFIELD

6. *Esdraelon* is the great triangular plain which breaks the continuity of the Central Range and affords clear passage from the coast to the Jordan. It had five entrances, three at the corners of the triangle, one at Jezreel, and one at Megiddo. These were all gates on the great road from Asia to Africa, through which marauding Bedouin pressed from the East and the armies of great empires passed. Hence its history as a battle field.

The Story. Four battles, two of them victories for Israel and two of them defeats: (1) Deborah and Barak,

Judg. 4-5; (2) Gideon, Judg. 6-7; (3) Saul, I Sam. 28-31; (4) Josiah, II Kings 23:29-30.

Samaria's Ease of Access

7. The history-making feature of *Samaria* also is its openness. The gentle ridges on the west offer easy access from the coast. Even on the steeper East "the outgoings of Mount Ephraim" are broad and of easy gradients. Interspersed among the mountains in the center are plains, meadows and spacious vales. Hence the land was easy for chariots. "All the long drives of the Old Testament are in Samaria." One result was frequent invasions. Another was its connection with Eastern Palestine which has existed from the earliest times to the present day; the easy passes and numerous fords of the Jordan here are in sharp contrast with the separation of Judaea from the east by the steep chasm and the few and dangerous fords farther south. Still another result of the openness of Samaria was that "the surrounding paganism poured into her ample life," and as a consequence of this she suffered many changes of rulers. The Northern Kingdom had nine dynasties, the Southern only one. The Northern Kingdom fell more than a hundred years before the fall of the Southern Kingdom. In short, as Smith says, Samaria was more forward to attract than Judaea but less able to retain.

The Story: (1) Jacob at Bethel, Gen. 28:10-22; (2) Joshua at Shechem, Deut. 11:26-30, 27:9-26; Josh. 8:30-34; (3) Samuel at Shiloh, I Sam. 1-4; (4) Elijah at Mt. Carmel, I Kings 18; (5) Elisha at Samaria, II Kings 5; (6) Jehu at Jezreel, II Kings 9.

Judaea's Spiritual Supremacy

8. *Judaea* was the heart of the land, the seat of Israel's one enduring dynasty, the site of her temple, the platform of all her chief prophets. Isolated, unattractive, provin-

cial, conservative, she held the world off longest. Study carefully the borders and bulwarks of this stony plateau. The most accessible frontier was on the north, and here accordingly many battles were fought. Judaea was a stronghold, not impregnable, but very difficult to take. Outstanding features of the province are its pastoral character (Ps. 23), its vine culture (Numb. 13:23), and its natural unfitness for the growth of a great city. "Aloof, waterless, on the road to nowhere," yet here arose the city which has taught the world civic justice and has given her name to the ideal city hoped for on earth—the new Jerusalem.*

The Story: (1) Abraham at Hebron; (2) Ruth at Bethlehem; (3) Jonathan at Michmash; (4) David at Jerusalem.

The Jordan Valley, a Barrier

9. *The Lower Jordan* is thought of as a border and a barrier; the name is nearly always governed by a preposition, *unto, over, across.* "The Pride (mistranslated "swelling") of Jordan" was the rank jungle along its banks—always a symbol of trouble and danger, Jer. 12:5, 49:19.

The Story: (1) Destruction of the Cities of the Plain, Gen. 19:17-29; (2) Israel's Crossing of the Jordan, Josh. 3; (3) Fall of Jericho, Josh. 6.

The Eastern Range, Comparatively Uninfluential

10. *The Eastern Highlands* are generally well watered and fertile, but being separated from the body of the nation by the Jordan gorge, had comparatively small influence on the course of the history.

The Story: (1) Jacob at Peniel, Gen. 32; (2) Israel's Conquest, Deut. 3:26—4:17; (3) Defeat of Absalom, II Sam. 18.

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*G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land.*

Manners and Customs of the Land

11. While the land itself possesses the cosmopolitan character above described, so that the imagery of scripture drawn from its natural scenery is readily understood in all parts of the world, the case is different when we come to the manners and customs of the people. The Old Testament is an Oriental book. The life it describes belongs to the East and is widely different from life in the West. Nearly every feature of it is foreign to our experience, and it undergoes no change from age to age. Certain capitalists and settlers from without have indeed introduced a few modern features, especially in some of the larger towns, such as railroads, telegraph lines and hotels, but these have had little or no effect on the patriarchal usages of the body of the people. The traveler in Syria to-day sees Abraham at his tent-door; Rebekah veiling herself at the approach of the stranger; Boaz greeting his field hands; the long caravan of camels and Midianites; the wailing mourners at the house of death; the wedding procession; the shepherd with his sheep on the hill-side.* The ways of the people are thus to this day a living commentary on the Old Testament. "Hence to fully understand the letter of the Written Word an intimate knowledge of every-day life in the Holy Land is absolutely necessary. Without this, in a thousand places, it is impossible to elucidate its meaning, remove its difficulties, picture its scenes, or realize its beauty."

BLACKBOARD AND MAP WORK

Whatever knowledge the class may have of the elementary geography of Palestine, begin at the beginning, and fix firmly in the minds of all the fundamental features of the country and the location of the most important places. At the first meeting of a training class the time is

*J. H. Vincent.

often wasted, as no lesson has been assigned and prepared. Do not make that mistake, but devote the whole of the first hour to a thorough drill on the following points, using first the blackboard and then a map. Then assign Lesson I, above given, for the second meeting, and require each member of the class to draw and bring to that meeting an outline map showing the Lines, Waters, Natural Divisions, Mountains and Places as indicated below. A convenient treatment of these rudimentary points may be found in J. L. Hurlbut's Manual of Biblical Geography, pp. 143-147, but they can all be effectively presented with a blackboard. Thus, after the manner of Hurlbut drill the class on

1. *Lines:* (1) Coast Line, 180 miles, harborless.
   (2) Jordan Line, 160 miles, river very crooked.
2. *Bodies of Water:* (1) Mediterranean or "Great Sea."
   (2) Lake Merom—the name means "high."
   (3) Sea of Chinnereth—in New Testament "Galilee."
   (4) "Salt Sea," now known as Dead Sea.
3. *Natural Divisions:* (1) Maritime Plain (M. P.)
   (2) Western Highlands (W. H.)
   (3) Jordan Valley (J. V.)
   (4) Eastern Highlands (E. H.)
4. *Mountains:* Eight, named in pairs, with some event of interest in connection with each [two of these from the New Testament].
   (1) Hermon (Transfiguration) and Lebanon (Cedars).
   (2) Carmel (Elijah) and Gilboa (Saul).
   (3) Ebal (Curses) and Gerizim (Blessings).
   (4) Olivet (Ascension) and Nebo (Moses).
5. *Places*—with some event of interest in connection with each.
   In Maritime Plain:
   (1) Gaza, Samson.
   (2) Joppa, Jonah.
   (3) Tyre, Sea Trade.
   In Western Highlands:
   (1) Beersheba, Southern frontier.
   (2) Hebron, tomb of patriarchs.
   (3) Bethlehem, home of David.
   (4) Jerusalem, Capital.
   (5) Bethel, Jacob's vision.
   (6) Shechem, first capital of Northern Kingdom.

(7) Samaria, last capital of Northern Kingdom.

In Jordan Valley:

(1) Jericho, fall of walls.
(2) Dan, northern frontier.

In Eastern Highlands:

(1) Peniel, Jacob's wrestling.
(2) Ramoth Gilead, Jehu anointed.
(3) Mahanaim, David's headquarters.
(4) Jabesh-Gilead, relieved by Saul.

LITERATURE

The best book on the subject is *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, by George Adam Smith, $3.75.

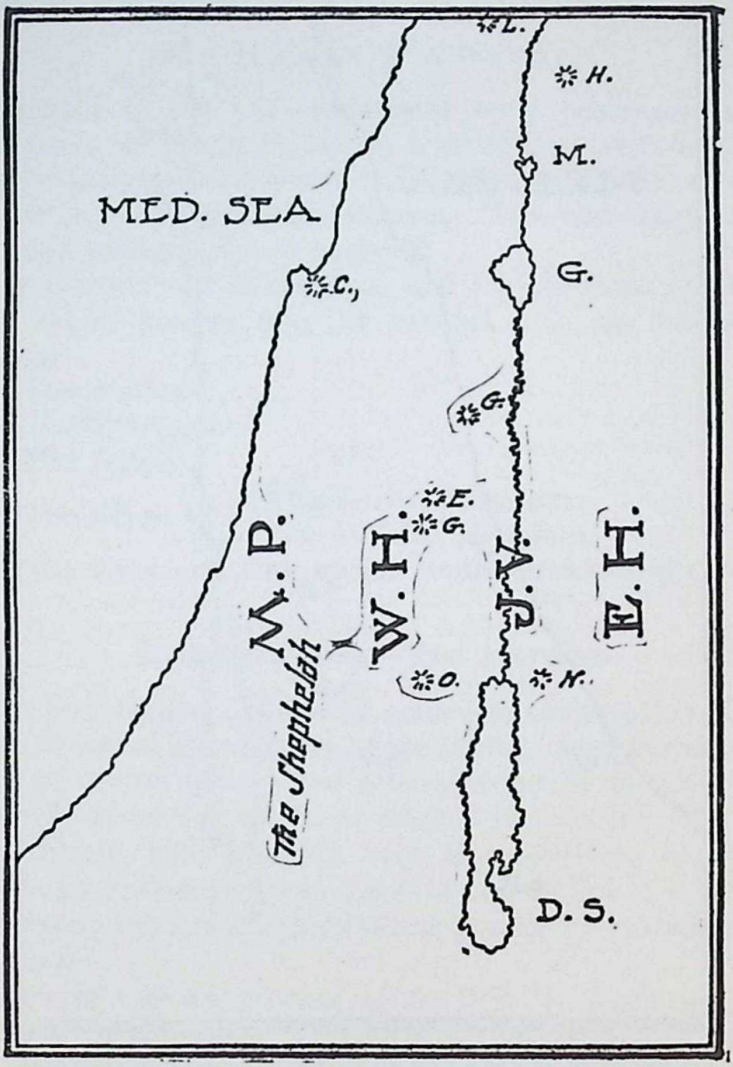
The best maps will be found in the *Atlas of the Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, by J. G. Bartholomew and G. A. Smith, $7.50.

Less expensive than the books above named are the various handbooks, such as *The Land of Israel*, by R. L. Stewart, $1.50; *Palestine*, by Archibald Henderson, $1.00; *Historical Geography of Bible Lands*, by J. B. Calkin, $1.25; *Historical Geography of Bible Lands*, by R. M. Hodge, $1.00; *Manual of Biblical Geography*, by J. L. Hurlbut, $2.25; and *The Students' Illustrated Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, by W. W. Smith, 75c., where the teacher will find in a prefixed section very full and detailed information as to the publishers and prices of atlases, wall and class maps, pictures, and general materials for hand work. Any one of these manuals will serve as an introduction to the subject, but the teacher who wishes to make a thorough study of it will do well to procure also the brilliant and suggestive book by Smith.

On manners and customs, see *Every-day Life in the Holy Land*, by James Neil, richly illustrated in colors.

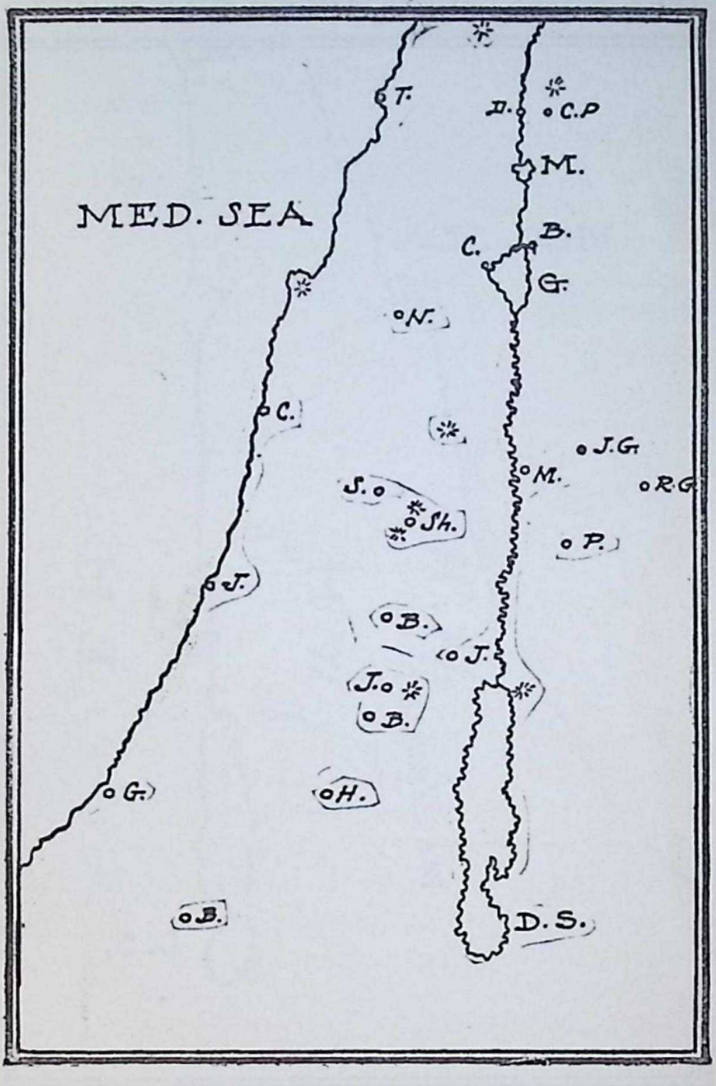
The Land and the Book, by W. M. Thomson, copiously illustrated, deals with both the topography and the life of the people. One volume edition, $2.40.

LINES, WATERS, NATURAL DIVISIONS AND MOUNTAINS



For the names indicated by the initial letters see 2, 3 and 4 on page 11

PLACES



For the names indicated by the letters see 5 on page 11

LESSON II

The History of a Nation

Students of the Old Testament must remember that each book, or group of books, was written with its own peculiar purpose, and is not to be taken as written merely for historical or scientific reasons. The Old Testament is a book with a religious purpose.

For convenience in treating, and for clearness of view, the field of history may be divided into the following periods:

1. The Nations.
2. The Patriarchs.
3. The Judges.
4. The Kings { (1) The United Kingdom. (2) The Divided Kingdom.
5. The Exile and Restoration under Priests and Governors.

I. Genesis 1-11—The Nations

The first chapter of Genesis, recording the creation of the world, is one of the miracles of the Bible. In the main, the order of events follows the general order of the development of life on the earth, as science records it. The Infinite Spirit, who brooded over the primitive waste of waters, so rested over the mind of the recorder, that the scientist to-day may find no sound reason for quarrel with the record.

The origin, or early home, of the first family of our race is placed in the west of Asia, in the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The early developments of the human race, the parity and helpful dependence of the sexes,

the origin and rapid spread of evil, the punitive and purging waters of the great Flood, the second beginnings of the race, through the family of Noah, and the distribution of his descendants over the adjacent districts of Asia, Africa and Europe, are vividly and interestingly recorded in these first eleven chapters of Genesis.

II. The Patriarchs. Genesis 12—Exodus 18

With the call of Abraham the Bible enters familiar ground. Much of the narrative of the patriarchs is being increasingly corroborated by comparative history and archaeology.

The text divides itself into the following sections:

1. Generations of Terah, Genesis 11:27-25:11; 2. Of Ishmael, 15: 11-18; 3. Of Isaac, 25:19-35; 4. Of Esau, 36; 5. Of Jacob, 37-50.

1. This section records one of the most important events in the history of the race: the call of Abraham, or Abram as he was first named, out of Ur of Chaldaea to preserve the monotheistic faith from the rapidly advancing polytheism of the Babylonian civilization. When, or at what age, Abram was called to leave Ur, we do not know, nor how many years he remained in Haran with his father and brother Nahor. At the age of seventy-five Abram and Lot received in Haran a further call to leave all, and go on toward Palestine.

The immigrants did not tarry on the outskirts of that land; but pushed on into its very center, pitching their tents successively in Shechem and Bethel, and building altars to Jehovah, in token of His claim, which they were laying, to the land. A severe famine soon drove them to Egypt for preservation of life, where Abram denied so ignobly his wife Sarah. Returning after the famine to Bethel, the two kinsmen agreed to separate from each

other. Lot chose the fertile plain in which lay Sodom and Gomorrah. Abram journeyed southward, and settled near ancient Hebron, building there also an altar to Jehovah. The sorrows of Lot in Sodom, through the invasion of the kings of Babylonia; the promise of a son and the birth of Ishmael by Hagar; the promise of a son to Sarah; the destruction of the cities of the plain, Lot escaping; the birth of Isaac; his offering up, the death of Sarah; the marriage of Isaac to his cousin Rebekah; his death and burial by the side of Sarah, complete the narrative of the life of the Father of the Faithful.

2. The sections dealing with the generations of Ishmael and Esau may be passed over. The Isaac section shows the development of the Abrahamic family in resources and in firmer hold on Southern Canaan. Isaac was a man of quiet, peaceful ways, but with ability and thrift, increasing the family possessions, and their claim on the Land of Promise. The larger part of this section is given to the graphic story of his twin sons, Esau and Jacob, their rivalry and strife, covering chapters 27-36.

3. The "Generations of Jacob," the last and the longest of the sections, is really the story of his son Joseph. His betrayal and sale into slavery; the rise to power in Egypt in spite of hardships and misfortunes; the rescue of his father and brothers from famine; the family of Jacob resident in Egypt to be nourished by Joseph, form one of the most beautiful stories to be found in the literature of the world. There are some fine and striking features too suggestive to be passed over by the teacher; such as the conceit of the young prince, filling even his dreams, to be humbled by the sufferings and humiliation of slavery; the secret of his success: "Jehovah was with Joseph"; and the accurate description of Egyptian life and customs, as though the record were that of an eyewitness.

4. The days of Moses begin with the first chapter of Exodus. The affliction of the descendants of Jacob, or Israel, by the Egyptians in order to check their marvelous numerical increase, and to keep them weak and humble for bond-service; the providential preservation of the child Moses, and his preparation for his mission of deliverance; the conflict between himself and Aaron with Pharaoh, told in terms of the ten plagues; the Exodus from Egypt and the journey to Sinai, cover the first eighteen chapters of Exodus, and complete the Patriarchal period.

III. The Judges, or the Early National-Tribal Period

Exodus 19 marks the beginning of a new era in Hebrew history. Heretofore the history has dealt with a wandering tribe, or group of tribes, in patriarchal simplicity; henceforth it deals with a national organization, under a succession of great leaders known as Judges, such as Moses, Joshua, and their successors. This period extends to the administration of Samuel, by whom the first king was crowned, I Sam. 12.

Under Moses the nation was organized into a civil body with constitution and laws, commonly called the Law of Moses, covering civil, moral and religious details. This achievement of Moses, bringing mutually jealous, fractious and undisciplined tribes into compact organization, has marked him as the greatest of national heroes and founders. He did not bring the people into the land promised them, but dying on the eve of their entrance, committed this triumph to his disciple and lieutenant Joshua.

After the strong hands of Moses and Joshua were removed by death from control, a period of disintegration, tribal rivalries and partial anarchy set in, almost destroy-

ing the national organization, and leaving the people unprotected against the invasions of their enemies. In crises of invasion or oppression great spiritual champions, called "judges," rose up to lead them to deliverance. The records of their deeds are found in the book of Judges, and the first twelve chapters of I Samuel.

IV. The Kings and Prophets

1. *The United Kingdom.* Samuel was a transition character. He brought Israel into closer and more progressive national organization. They cried for a national leader, a king with authority; and Samuel by Divine direction gave them Saul. The failure of Saul serves as a suitable perspective for the popularity and success of David. The record of Samuel's administration is blended with that of Saul, and in turn Saul's with David's in I Samuel; giving the student an excellent view of the development of the nation from the chaos of tribal rivalry under the Judges to a united kingdom under David.

The history of the reign of David, after the account in I Samuel of his early life and his relations with Saul, is given in II Samuel. The second part of I Chronicles parallels the account in II Samuel. David united the tribes of Israel into an organized people with a national consciousness. He extended the borders of this new kingdom until its influence prevailed from the borders of Egypt to the Euphrates River. David is the beloved man of the Old Testament, a man after the people's heart, as well as after God's. He has left an ideal of kingliness to all succeeding ages, just as he gave royal form to the Messianic hope.

The reign of Solomon is chiefly of interest in the Old Testament, because he built the Temple and organized its service. Some space is given to his work in developing the industries, centralizing the civil organization, and ex-

tending the foreign influence of the nation. With him the process of decay was already at work; and soon after his death the old tribal jealousies of earlier periods broke forth with such force as to disrupt the nation again into tribal groups.

2. *The Divided Kingdom.* The apostasy and oppressions of Solomon raised antagonism against the tribe of Judah, which ripened into a rebellious schism led by the tribe of Ephraim. The revolution did not result in the overthrow of David's house, but in the restriction of its sovereignty to Judah, Levi, and possibly parts of Benjamin and Simeon. The remaining tribes followed after Jeroboam, an Ephraimite, forming the more powerful kingdom, with capitals at Shechem and Tirzah. Nearly fifty years later, under King Omri, Samaria became the permanent capital. The history of the two kingdoms is found in I Kings 13 to II Kings 17. Chapters 11-28 of II Chronicles parallel the chapters of Kings in a briefer account.

The Northern Kingdom in the little more than two centuries of its existence (B. C. 933-721) was ruled by seven dynasties, not including several usurpers, who held the reins of power for a brief time. These dynasties were begun by Jeroboam, Baasha, Omri, Jehu, Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea. So far as pomp and display are concerned, the kingdom may be said to have reached its highest point in Ahab (B. C. 778-754); with reference to military strength, extent of boundaries, and political influence, it was at its maximum in the last years of Jehoash and the first of Jeroboam II, between B. C. 800 and 750. In 721 Samaria was taken by the armies of Assyria, after the other parts of Israel had already been taken; and the last chapter of the Kingdom of Israel was closed.

The Southern Kingdom, or *Judah*, beginning under Solomon's son, Rehoboam, contemporaneously with the

Northern Kingdom under Jeroboam, lasted one hundred and thirty-five years longer. It was ruled continuously by the House of David, and the reigns of the kings were, as a rule, longer and firmer than those of Israel. Judah was nominally loyal to Jehovah, and maintained at least the forms of temple worship and of the Law of Moses.

The nation fell in 586 with the fall of Jerusalem before the armies of Nebuchadnezzar. The period of the two kingdoms offers one of the most interesting fields, possibly the most interesting field, of history in the Old Testament. The march of events is dramatic, the character developments are vivid, and the moral and spiritual values seen in persons are unmistakable. The two great catastrophes of the nation, the fall of Samaria and the fall of Jerusalem, serve as excellent pivotal points for study and teaching.

V. Priests and Governors

1. *The Period of the Babylonian Exile* must be studied in the pages of the prophets, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. In the historical books there is little more than mere allusion. The poorest of the people were left in Palestine. The more intelligent and well-to-do classes were carried into captivity; and there only in part remained true to their religion and its customs. The conformity to Babylonian life was so extensive, that only a minority of the exiles were willing to return under the edict of Cyrus with Zerubbabel, and seventy-nine years later under the leadership of Ezra.

2. *The Restoration* consisted of two principal movements, the first in B. C. 537 under Zerubbabel, a prince of the royal blood, the second under Ezra, a priest, in 458. To these may be added the coming of Nehemiah about 444. The narrative of these efforts at restoration are contained in Ezra and Nehemiah, and in the prophecies

of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. A picture of the trials and achievements of the Jews who remained in the East, while their brethren were restoring Judaea, is given in the dramatic story of Esther. The story of the centuries between the Testaments is of great value and intense interest; many of the decisive events and developments of Jewish history lie in those days of Greek, Syrian and Roman dependence; but they are not a part of the Old Testament history.

The Purpose and Message of Old Testament History is the element of importance in its study, above the mere service as records or literature. It gives the gradual development of the Divine purpose, to select and prepare from all the nations of the earth one people through which He will preserve and make known His truth and love to all nations. The history shows how this people was led about among the nations of the earth, and given the largest opportunity to fulfil its mission; but failed of that mission. This conflict resulted in the production of the priceless spiritual and ethical literature of the Old Testament found in the Prophets, Psalms and Wisdom Writings. The final purpose of the Old Testament was to prepare for the clearer revelation of God in the New Testament through His Son.

SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS

(1) What are the character and the real purpose of the Old Testament historical books?

(2) The division of the historical material into periods, and the leaders or national heads in each period should always be clearly in mind.

(3) The pivotal nature of such characters as Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Hezekiah and Nehemiah, and the services they rendered, can be made landmarks of the historical field.

(4) Get a clear conception of the spiritual message of Old Testament history, as well as of the dramatic and stirring movement of its story of the rise and fall of a nation.

LESSON III

The Laws and Institutions of the Old Testament

The laws of the Old Testament are not grouped in one continuous section, nor formulated in one great code, but are distributed through a large part of the literature. The five books of the Law contain history, statistics, poetry, in addition to laws. Even the greater groups or codes, such as the Book of the Covenant or the Levitical laws, are given in their historical setting. They are, as it were, a part of the rapidly moving current of history.

1. Some of the laws are *primitive*, coming down from the earliest days of the human race. Such is the law of the Sabbath, Gen. 2:2, 3; of the tithe as it appears in Gen. 14 and 28; of punishment for homicide in the covenant with Noah, Gen. 9:5, 6; of absolute right in slaves, Gen. 16:6.

2. Other laws, or legal customs, found among the Hebrews were *borrowed* from other nations, with whom they were in close contact. The rite of circumcision came by divine command, when introduced into the family of Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14). Indeed direction or recognition by God is always affirmed as the ground of institution for the religious laws and customs of the Hebrews, whether these were peculiar to themselves or held in common with other peoples. The civil laws of the Babylonians influenced the relations of the Hebrews, since the Hebrews migrated out of Babylon, and lived in the sphere of Babylonian influence. Many of the civil ordinances of the Mosaic Law are paralleled by the laws of the Hammurabi Code. It is also probable that some of the ceremonial elements of the Levitical Law were suggested by the Egyptian ceremonial practices.

3. Besides the primitive laws, which are embedded in the narrative, and the loan values from other nations, there were many *quaint customs*, which the Hebrews had either brought down with them from their ancestral past, or had received from the peoples among whom they moved. Some of these were the ways in which lands and titles were transferred; the celebration of many of their festivals; the manner in which aged fathers blessed their sons; the festal celebration of marriage; and the social features of harvesting and threshing.

4. The important body of laws found in the Old Testament is the *Mosaic code*, recorded in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The limited space of this volume will not permit a discussion of the critical theories formed and advanced to explain the origin of this remarkable code.

The Book of the Covenant

1. When the Israelites arrived at Sinai, and encamped there for the organization of the National life, a solemn and binding covenant was entered into with Jehovah, by the terms of which each was to be holy, or separated, unto the other. The terms of the covenant were formulated in the most famous moral enactments, known as the Ten Commandments. For a people so recently escaped from slavery and just entering upon a long and difficult course of organization, a preliminary and immediate legal code was necessary; and this we find immediately after the Decalogue, in Exodus 21-23. These "words" and "ordinances," as they are called, have to do with the rights of persons, especially the protection of the weak, property rights pastoral and agricultural, fundamental moral principles, and certain simple religious observances.

The Tabernacle and Its Service

2. When so close a relationship to Jehovah had been formed, it was natural that a fitting and sufficient ceremonial of worship should be inaugurated. In Exodus 25-31 are to be found directions given by Jehovah to Moses for building the Tabernacle with all of its furnishings. These directions were interrupted by the worship of a golden calf. When the judgment of destruction had been averted by the intercession of Moses, this interruption of the Divine plan (chaps. 32-34) is followed by an account of the completion and dedication of the Tabernacle according to the specifications given on Sinai (chaps. 35-40).

For this holy dwelling of the Holy God there must be holy sacrifices and a holy priesthood to offer them; and the people themselves must be a holy people. The book of Leviticus is concerned with these three subjects: holy sacrifices (1-7), holy priests (8-10), a holy people (11-27).

The Levitical Law in Operation

3. Ordinarily the book of Numbers is grouped with Exodus, and Leviticus as part of the Law of the Priests. Certain necessary provisions not found in the preceding books of the Law, and certain alterations in order to the adaptation of the laws to practical use are found in this book. Examples are, arrangements for the support of the sanctuary and its ritual; provision for moving the Tabernacle in their journeys; directions for special sacrifices of festal occasions; the second passover for those who were unclean at the time of the first; cities of refuge; inheritance of daughters; marriage of heiresses; division of the land soon to be conquered. The book of Numbers may therefore be called the "Supplement to the Law," or the "Law in Operation." We might also call it the "Book of Un-

belief and Discontent"; as one in the New Testament wrote, "they entered not in (to Canaan) because of unbelief."

The Deuteronomic Law

4. When the Israelites had journeyed round to the east of the Jordan, had conquered the kingdoms of Og and Sihon, and were soon to cross over into Canaan, Moses, forbidden to enter the Land of Promise with them, delivers his last appeal to them, exhorting them to hold fast to their faith in Jehovah, and to their obligations to each other as a nation of brothers. These two principles: loyalty to Jehovah promoted by worship at one sanctuary, and the unity of the nation around the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," are the fundamental principles of the book of Deuteronomy. The book consists of three parts: a historical review as an introduction (1-4), the body of laws, (5-26), and supplementary sections (27-34).

One cannot conceive of a more appropriate setting for such a book than the parting of Moses and Israel, nor a more appropriate book for such an occasion than Deuteronomy. This book is a popularization of the Law for the people, laying stress on neighborly duties, humanitarian considerations, festal occasions, individual and community cleanness, rights of slaves, of the poor and of strangers, and Divine Fatherhood and human brotherhood.

5. As a *summary of the preceding sections*, the Law may be viewed in the following stages: *First, preliminary* or *outline enactments* for the control of the people just organized into a nation, called the *Book of the Covenant*, with the Decalogue, comprising chapters 20-23 of Exodus. *Secondly*, the *Law of the sanctuary and of the priests*, in the remaining chapters of Exodus and in Leviticus. *Thirdly*, the book of Numbers is devoted to the *Law in operation*

and to some necessary supplements originating in wilderness experiences. And *fourthly*, the *great spiritual and social principles of the Law*, recorded in Deuteronomy. Leviticus may be called the handbook of the priests, and Deuteronomy the Law for the people.

The Moral Meaning and Excellence of the Hebrew Laws

Sometimes it is asked: "What is the meaning, and what the service of all these sacrifices and ceremonials?" They were intended to promote spirituality over against the materialism and the grossness of the contemporary pagan worship. Brotherhood was emphasized, as in treatment of slaves, kindness to the poor, prohibition of usury, in order to hold the tribes together for the realization of the Divine purpose in the nation. Holiness was required of those who served and represented Jehovah; and the fundamental element in all moral order, righteousness which exalteth a nation and makes glad the heart, was always in evidence. The highest principle of all law, which is love, was required of all. The Law was given to Israel in Divine foresight, to check the drift of their hearts toward apostasy, to meet their moral needs, and to help toward realization of spiritual ideals.

Institutions of the Old Testament

1. *The Home.* The Home was not unknown to other ancient nations and civilizations; but it appears with marked characteristics in the Old Testament. The earliest beginnings of the human race are represented in terms of the family. The Hebrew family expanded into the Hebrew State; but the family organization and spirit were to continue in the state as a greater brotherhood. The Deca-

logue and all other groups of laws emphasized the home. The family bond held for ill as truly as for good. Achan's family perished with him, as on the other hand faithful David's was blessed with him. The family was the foundation of the nation; it, and not the individual, was the unit of society. A believer was blest in terms of his family. This is the significance of the Covenant. To "build a house," or family, in Israel was the highest aspiration. From such a high conception of the home we pass easily to the New Testament teachings about the Heavenly Father's house of many mansions.

Marriage was honored, and polygamy was not contemplated. The training of children was a duty of prime importance; for it was believed that the hope of the nation was to be realized in the next, or in some succeeding, generation. It can be seen at once, therefore, how deeply our modern civilization, as well as our modern church, is indebted to the Old Testament for the home.

2. *The State and the Church.* The Old Testament reader may see human society in the making, from the patriarchal family, with the father as king-priest to the elaborated monarchical system of Solomon. The ideal State of the Old Testament was a nation of brothers, with Jehovah as Father-King. In such a nation injustice and oppression were iniquitous, because they violated the sacred obligations of brotherhood. It is not always easy to distinguish between the State, or Kingdom, and the Church. Their sphere and nature were often the same; and in the New Testament this association of the two gives form to the first Messianic message: "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (See Davidson's Theology of the O. T., pp. 235 ff.)

3. *Sacrifices.* The Hebrew, in common with other nations, received the fact of sacrifices as a heritage from the

past. Early in human history these acts of worship were instituted by Divine command, or with Divine approval (see Gen. 4:3, etc.). They were, however, given clearer and richer meaning as developed under explicit direction from God in the Hebrew ritual. Several ideas were represented in sacrifice: (1) fellowship with God, especially in the peace-offering, (2) propitiation and restoration, (3) and suffering for sin through a vicarious substitute. While all ideas are present, the consciousness of guilt and the need of expiation are most prominent, as the ritual of blood and the laying on of hands indicate. Sacrifice served the present need of the worshipper, in that it showed the enormity of sin which separated him from God; and it pointed him to the future, when God Himself would make atonement and restoration. So the Jewish Christians readily understood this Old Testament institution.

QUESTIONS AND SUMMARY

(1) Why are the Laws not found grouped into one code, exclusive of all other literary matter? What are some of the primitive laws and customs, older possibly than Israel?

(2) Get and hold clearly in mind the outline of the legislation found in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. What is the "Book of the Covenant," and how is it related to Leviticus and to Deuteronomy?

(3) What is the moral and spiritual significance of these Hebrew laws?

(4) What are the characteristics of such institutions as the family, Church, State and sacrifice; and how have they affected modern institutions?

LESSON IV

THE PROPHETS OF ISRAEL

Characteristic of all Periods of the Old Testament

In a certain sense Prophecy is a phenomenon peculiar to the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. It is also a phenomenon which appears in all periods of the Old Testament revelation. Abram was Jehovah's prophet (Gen. 20:7). Moses was the beginning of the famous line of prophets, which runs almost unbroken to the end of the Old Testament age. Nearly all of the Old Testament literature is prophetical in origin and character, and was so regarded by the Jews themselves. The six historical books immediately following the Law, Joshua to II Kings, excluding Ruth, are distinctly the work and message of prophets. The introduction to the Psalms (Ps. 1 and 2) declares the prophetic element in that book, which indeed the reader perceives without difficulty. Prophecy appears to be the most important element in the Old Testament literature and religion.

The Prophet's Preparation for His Ministry

The manner of this preparation, while of considerable interest to us, must remain largely a matter of conjecture, because of the scant allusion to it in the Scriptures. That order, or group, commonly called "sons of the prophets" was not a theological school in the sense in which we understand the term; but was rather a banding together of men of prophetic gift and calling in times of national and religious crisis. They seem to have been, not schools, but semi-monastic associations of men, who were Jehovah worshipers and messengers, for mutual protection and inspiration, often gathered around a great leader, such as Samuel or Elisha. One known practice in the prophet's

preparation was apprenticeship, an older prophet choosing and training a young disciple to carry on his work. Moses had his Joshua, Eli his Samuel, the mantle of Elijah fell on Elisha, and at the end of the age Paul found and nourished his spiritual son Timothy. As the complement of such preparation the young prophet would bring to his task all the intellectual gifts and attainments which qualified him for moral and spiritual leadership in his age. Of course, the decisive element beyond all of these, in the prophet's call and equipment, was the outpoured and indwelling Spirit of God.

Methods of Classifying the Prophets

It may serve toward a clearer outline of the prophetic work and literature to suggest methods of classification.

1. There is the *Hebrew* division into two groups—

(1) *The Former Prophets*, Joshua, Judges, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings. That these books are truly prophetical, as the Hebrew canon judged them to be, is evident from their contents.

(2) *Latter Prophets*: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the twelve minor prophets. The Latter Prophets are further divided into (a) Major: Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and (b) Minor, the twelve being considered together as making one book.

2. The most satisfactory classification for purposes of study is *according to historical periods*, which are clearly marked in the Old Testament. This division is as follows:

(1) *The Assyrian period*: Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Nahum and probably Joel.

(2) *Babylonian period* with two sub-periods: (a) Pre-exilic: Jeremiah, Obadiah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah; (b) Exilic: Ezekiel, and Daniel.

(3) *Persian period*: Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

Some Characteristics of the Prophets

1. *External features.* (1) The office was not hereditary, as in the case of king or priest. (2) There was no special age for ordination or induction into office. (3) They were chosen from any tribe or class, priestly, Levitical, princely or of the common people, without distinction. (4) They had no special dress and no official home. No external or official ceremonial characterized the prophet.

2. *The Spiritual Characteristics* are of more positive interest, some of which may be described as follows: (1) The prophet's call was of God. Ordinarily a supernatural manifestation preceded his entrance upon his ministry, often upon some specific mission. (Ex. 3; Isa. 6.) (2) His one business was to deliver God's message. Not at all do they claim human originality, but rather that they were sent to proclaim the obligations of a forgotten or violated covenant, made at the beginning of the nation. (3) The prophet appeared as the most zealous champion of the unseen, but true God; and for this reason we find in his writings the great monotheistic arguments, and the ringing appeals for spirituality, as against an indolent ceremonialism. (4) He was the trusted adviser and friend of the people in times of danger; his were "the words of the wise which were as goads." (5) He was given insight into the future, as Amos said: "Surely the Lord Jehovah will do nothing, except He reveal His secret unto His servants the prophets." But foretelling is by no means the sum total, nor even the chief feature, of prophecy, although it is an important element. The prophet is the most heroic figure in the Old Testament, champion of truth, regardless of danger, indifferent to self-interest.

3. *False Prophets.* An evidence of the reality and power of the prophetic office is the existence of false prophets in various periods of Hebrew history. A well-known in-

stance is Ahab's consultation of them before his expedition against the Syrians (I Kings 22). Another period of prominence is the age of Jeremiah, who devotes a chapter to them (23). Ezekiel also handles them without gloves (ch. 13).

4. *Names and titles.* Three words are found in the Hebrew Scriptures commonly used as titles of the prophet: (1) *Ro'eh*, "seer," participle of the verb "to see," signifies one who sees or beholds. While the verb is used ordinarily of physical vision, this form is often applied to the spiritual vision of the Prophet. It is often used of Samuel. (2) *Choseh*, also translated "seer," as the preceding, but used as a verb, not of physical, but of mental or spiritual seeing, of one who has a mystical or ecstatic vision. (3) *Nabhi'*, ordinarily translated "prophet," and signifying one whose heart or mind boils over in intensity of feeling and utterance; this is the most common and the official word for the prophet. The three are found together in I Chron. 29:29, "Samuel the *ro'eh*, Nathan the *nabhi'*, and Gad the *choseh*." Besides these, several descriptive phrases are used, such as "messenger of the Lord," "servant of God," "friend of God," and especially "Man of God."

Brief Survey of the Prophetical Books

Prophets of the Assyrian Period

(1) *Isaiah* was a Judean prophet, whose home was in Jerusalem. He must have begun his ministry about 741 B. C.; in the reign of Uzziah, and have concluded it not earlier than 697, the beginning of Manasseh's evil reign. Very little is known of the prophet's life, other than his father's name, Amoz, that he had a wife and children, and that he received a specific call in the year of King Uzziah's death. His book is unsurpassed for beauty of expression, richness of imagery, and for the intensity and the reach of

spiritual vision. He opposed with eloquence injustice and oppression, and plead for truth and equity in days of astounding social corruption. It might be said that his theme was "righteousness." The book is quoted in the New Testament oftener than any other, because in dark and difficult days the prophet gazed into the distant future for hope, and had a vision of Jehovah's salvation under the figures of "Immanuel" and "the Servant of Jehovah." His book is therefore the most personally Messianic in the Old Testament.

(2) *Hosea* was a contemporary of Isaiah, but was a native and prophet of the Northern Kingdom, probably of Galilee. His book has two clearly distinct parts, the first three chapters which must have been produced earlier than 750 B. C., in the reign of Jeroboam II, who died in 749; and the last eleven chapters, which were delivered some years later when anarchy and rapid dynastic changes had set in, and the Kingdom of Israel was tottering to its fall. The first three chapters present the infidelity of Israel to Jehovah, who had so long and so graciously blessed them, under the illustration of Hosea's loved but adulterous wife. The book is full of tenderness and of beautiful illustrations from nature and from every-day life. Its keynote is Jehovah's tender and unmerited love. It is suggestive that this Galilean preacher spoke so much like Him who taught and plead with Galilean multitudes nearly eight centuries later.

(3) *Amos* was a native of Judah, but a prophet to the Northern Kingdom. He is contemporary with Isaiah and Hosea, a little earlier than Isaiah, and in the earliest years of Hosea. His messages may have been delivered on a single visit to Israel, which is dated "two years before the earthquake," supposed to have occurred about 750 B. C. The theme of the book is the injustice and op-

pression prevalent in Israel, which the Righteous Jehovah will call into judgment.

(4) *Joel* was grouped by the Old Testament editors with the preceding Assyrian prophets. The book bears no date, and has been assigned to a variety of dates. The book refers to a national disaster, a plague of locusts, to be taken either literally or as symbolical of a foreign invasion. Because of this the prophet calls to repentance, fasting and prayer. Afterwards there will be spiritual refreshing and regeneration, described in words, which Peter quoted at Pentecost of the outpouring of the Spirit.

(5) *Jonah* was a prophet of the reign of Jeroboam II, when the Northern Kingdom was at its best (II Kings 14:25). This would put his ministry about 770 B. C., several years before Hosea and Amos. The book teaches the universal sway of Jehovah, over Assyria as well as Israel, and rebukes the narrowness of Israel through the experience of Jonah, who was unwilling to preach repentance to Nineveh.

(6) *Micah* was a younger contemporary of Isaiah, and a Judean prophet. His style is different (altogether) from Isaiah's; he was a countryman, and uses the figures of agriculture and peasant life, while Isaiah was of the city and spoke with elegance. Like Isaiah, however, Micah preaches the hope of a personal Messiah. It was his prediction which told the wise men to seek the infant Saviour at Bethlehem.

(7) *Nahum* prophesied near the end of the Assyrian period, and describes vividly the approaching fall of Nineveh. It is probable that he lived and wrote in Assyria, and was descended from parents carried into exile.

Prophets of the Babylonian Period.

(1) *Jeremiah* was a priest and a native of Anathoth, a suburb of Jerusalem. He began to prophesy in the thir-

teenth year of Josiah, about 627 B. C., and continued his ministry at least until 585 B. C., after the destruction of Jerusalem, when he accompanied refugee Jews down to Egypt. It is the ideal book of the busy and brave prophet. Rich imagery and impassioned eloquence, denunciation of sin and tender pleas for repentance, melting compassion and fiery indignation are blended into a stirring message.

(2) *Obadiah's* message of one chapter deals with the cruel advantage which Edom took of Judah, helpless from some invasion or disaster. Edom will be destroyed; while Zion is comforted with the promise of a glorious future.

(3) *Ezekiel*, a younger contemporary of Jeremiah, and greatly influenced by him, was deported to Babylon when Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem in 597 B. C. While the city was standing the prophet denounced the sins of the sensual Jews in Babylon, and plainly foretold the fall of their beloved city. After its fall he preached to them good tidings of forgiveness, and of ultimate restoration, presented in the symbols of a restored temple and service.

(4) *Habakkuk* prophesied in the days of Josiah. He denounced the corrupt conditions of the nation, and foretold their chastisement by the Babylonians. The book closes with a beautiful psalm of faith. This prophet wrote the phrase so often used, "The just shall live by faith."

(5) *Zephaniah* also belongs to the reign of Josiah. His message was against the corruptions and oppressive deeds of his people. They and all the nations will be judged; but Zion shall come back in gladness from captivity.

(6) In connection with the Babylonian period it would be well to read Isaiah 40-66, since these chapters look forward to this period.

(7) While the book of *Daniel* is the fourth of the Major Prophets in the English Bible, and in the old Greek and Latin versions, it is placed with the Hagiographa of the Hebrew Bible. This original classification may be due to their viewing it as an apocalypse, rather than in its pro-

phetical aspects. It really bears both aspects, like the New Testament book of Revelation, with which it has many elements in common.

Prophets of the Persian Period.

(1) *Haggai* saw the Jews, who had returned to Judea, busy about their own fortunes, and faithless to the sacred duty for which Cyrus had sent them back to Palestine. In the second year of Darius the Great, 521 B. C., the prophet encourages the people to return to the building of the temple, which was completed, therefore, in 516.

(2) *Zechariah's* theme was much the same as Haggai's. He also began to prophesy in the same year. But his book is more ornate, and has apocalyptic features.

(3) *Malachi*, the last of the prophets, belonged to the second restoration, under Ezra and Nehemiah, about 444 B. C. He spoke against the religious indifference and the moral evils so often mentioned in Nehemiah. Mark began his Gospel with the prophetic promise of Malachi: "Behold I send my messenger (Hebrew 'Malachi') before thy face," thus linking Old and New Testaments together.

QUESTIONS AND SUMMARY.

(1) In what sense is prophecy a phenomenon peculiar to the Old Testament? Show that it is found in all periods of the history.

(2) How was the prophet prepared for his ministry?

(3) In what ways have the prophetical books been classified for conveniences of study? Get clearly in mind the classification according to *historical* periods.

(4) What are the distinctive features of the prophets?

(5) What are some titles of the prophet? Define prophecy.

(6) Learn the place of each prophet in the history of the nation; get an outline of his book and the distinctive feature of his message.

TABLE OF KINGS AND PROPHETS

(For Memorization or Handy Reference)

PERIOD	KINGS OF JUDAH	PROPHETS OF JUDAH	KINGS OF ISRAEL	PROPHETS OF ISRAEL
PRE-ASSYRIAN, (1010-860 B. C.)	Saul, David and Solomon.	Samuel, Nathan, Gad.	Saul, David and Solomon.	Samuel, Nathan, Gad.
EGYPT—Pharaoh-Shishak (927)	The Schism.		The Schism.	
	Rehoboam, (930 B. C.)		Jeroboam (930 B. C.)	
ASSYRIAN (860-606)			Ahab (875-853).	Elijah.
Dynasty of Shalmaneser II and successors (860-745).	Joash (842-801),	Joel.	Jehu to Jeroboam II (842-749).	Elisha, Jonah.
Dynasty of Tiglath-Pileser III and successors (745-606).	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah (787-697).	Isaiah. Micah.	Menahem, Pekah, Hoshea.	Amos. Hosea.
EGYPT—So. (712). Tirhakah (688).	Fall of Samaria (721).		Fall of Samaria (721).	
BABYLONIA, Nabapolassar, Nebuchadnezzar and successors (626-538).	Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakin, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah (639-586).	Jeremiah. Zephaniah. Habakkuk. Obadiah. Ezekiel. Daniel.		Nahum.
EGYPT—Necoh (609).	Fall of Jerusalem (586).			
PERSIAN— Cyrus and successors (538).	Zerubbabel, Governor (537-).	Haggai. Zechariah.		
	Nehemiah, Governor (444-).	Malachi.		

LESSON V

THE POETS OF ISRAEL

The Form of Hebrew Poetry

1. In the Authorized Version of the Bible prose and poetry are printed in the same way, but in the Revised Version the poetical portions are so printed that the reader can see at a glance that they *are* poetical. This may be seen not only in the poems found here and there in the historical books, *e. g.*, Jacob's Prophecy Concerning his Sons (Gen. 49), The Song of Moses (Deut. 32), and the Hymn of Hannah (I Sam. 2:1-10), but also in certain whole books, viz.: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Songs, and Lamentations. This arrangement in lines is intended to exhibit the parallelism of members which is the chief characteristic of the form of Hebrew poetry. Poetry is distinguished from prose partly by its imaginative and concrete thought, partly by its vivid and elevated diction, but chiefly by its *rhythm*. In Hebrew poetry there was no *rhyme* except a few sporadic and apparently accidental cases, and there was no *metre* in the strict sense of the term, but there was always a certain rhythmical flow, a balancing of the parts of a sentence one against another in lines of approximately the same length, the sentiment of one line being echoed or completed or answered in the next. Four principal varieties of Parallelism may be distinguished:

(1) *Synonymous* parallelism, in which the two members express the same idea in different words: as—

Ps. 34:1, I will bless the Lord at all times,
His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

(2) *Antithetic* parallelism, in which the two members express contrasted ideas:

Prov. 15:1, A soft answer turneth away wrath;
But grievous words stir up anger.

(3) *Synthetic* parallelism, in which the second member expresses an advance on the idea of the first, but without changing the direction of the thought:

Ps. 19:7, The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul;
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

(4) *Constructive* parallelism, in which the second member carries on and completes the thought of the first:

Prov. 25:25, As cold waters to a thirsty soul,
So is good news from a far country.

There are numerous other combinations of parallel clauses which need not be cited here. From the examples given it will be seen that parallelism is an important factor in determining the meaning of a verse and also a great help to the memory.

Early Hebrew Lyrics

2. Hebrew poetry is almost exclusively lyric and gnomic. It had no epic and it had no drama properly speaking, though Job and the Song of Songs have a semi-dramatic form. The oldest known specimen of lyric poetry is the Sword Song of Lamech (Gen. 4:23). This, like the Song of the Well (Numb. 21:17-18) and David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan (II Sam. 1:19-27), is a secular poem, but with a few such exceptions the lyric poetry of the Hebrews that has been preserved to us is entirely of a religious character. The two most notable lyrics found in the earlier books are the ringing paean of Moses at the Red Sea, the

Te Deum of the rescued nation, their earliest national anthem (Ex. 15); and the stirring warchant of Deborah (Judg. 5), "a song that for force and fire is worthy to be placed alongside the noblest battle odes in any language." There is still another great poem belonging to this early period which shows even more impressively the high development to which lyric poetry had already attained—that lofty and melancholy hymn, the 90th Psalm, "a prayer of Moses the man of God," the permanent power of which is seen in the fact that it has been made a part of every funeral service in Christendom.

David

3. But the golden age of lyric poetry began with David. Musician and poet by nature, in turn shepherd, court-minstrel, companion and friend of the King, champion of the armies of God, idol of the people, outlaw, fugitive, warrior, king, sinner, sufferer, penitent and saint, "the manifold vicissitudes of his life gave him an unparalleled depth and variety of experience" and qualified him to be preeminently "the sweet psalmist of Israel" (II Sam. 23:1). "But genius and circumstances alone could not have produced the Psalms written by him. In his last words he himself declared,

> 'The spirit of the Lord spake in me,
> And His word was upon my tongue.'

Unique natural genius, trained and called into action by the discipline of a unique life, must still be quickened and illuminated by the supernal inspiration of the Holy Spirit, before it could strike out the strains which were to be the pattern and model of religious poetry for all the ages."

The Book of Psalms

4. Of the 150 Psalms in the collection the superscriptions assign 73 to David, 12 to Asaph, 12 to the sons of Korah 2 to Solomon, and 1 to Moses, while 50 are anonymous.

In the Revised Version, as in the Hebrew text, the Psalter is divided into five Books, (1-41, 42-72, 73-89, 90-106, 107-150), which are supposed to have been originally separate hymn books, compiled at different times for use in the Temple worship. The close of each Book is indicated by a doxology.

As to subject matter the Book of Psalms contains "the whole music of the heart of man swept by the hands of his Maker." It is "an anatomy of all parts of the soul." It reveals the heart of man not as innocent—in that case its value for us would be lost—but as deeply conscious of sin, and seeking in shame, penitence and hope to renew personal communion with God. It expresses the spiritual passion of the loftiest genius and the inarticulate longings of the unlettered peasant. So its language has become part of the daily life of nations. No other book has had so great an influence on the religious life of the world.

The best popular commentary on the Psalms is that of Alexander Maclaren (Expositor's Bible).

Proverbs

5. As the book of Psalms is the great collection of lyric poetry in the Old Testament, so the book of Proverbs is the great collection of gnomic or didactic poetry. As the Psalms teach us how to worship, so the Proverbs teach us how to live.

Authorship. The use of Solomon's name in the title of the book does not imply that he was the author of all its contents. The book itself tells us (25:1) that a large

addition to it was made by the scribes of Hezekiah, some three hundred years after the time of Solomon. The proverbs of still later authors also are added and their names are given (30:1, 31:1).

Contents. A proverb, in the modern sense of the word is a succinct and pithy maxim, condensing much matter into a few pointed and pungent words. The educational value of good proverbs is therefore evident at a glance. God's great text-book for humanity did not neglect such an agency. It contains much the richest and most varied collection of proverbs ever brought together in any literature. They sweep the whole range of human life and action, inculcating purity, temperance, veracity, honesty, industry, frugality, kindness, patience, perseverance, timeliness of speech, prudence, and many other virtues. It is a manual of morals, a handbook of practical ethics.

But its maxims are not merely prudential and economic. The keynote is godliness, the unifying principle is *Wisdom*—the true theory of life—and the beginning of Wisdom is the fear of the Lord, i. e. reverent faith.

The Book, however, does not consist solely of such detached maxims. A considerable portion of it is made up of hortatory discourses, which, though short, are marked by continuous treatment of subjects, 1:8-9.

The Commentaries of T. T. Perowne (Cambridge Bible for Schools) and R. F. Horton (Expositor's Bible) will be found helpful.

Job

6. Tennyson pronounces Job "the greatest poem, whether of ancient or modern times."

The theme of the Book is *The Trial of the Righteous.*

Job's friends contend that affliction is always the result of wrongdoing and that Job's aggravated suffering argues

some flagrant antecedent sin. Job passionately denies this. He does not claim to be sinless, but he knows he has committed no such iniquity as will account for his extraordinary sufferings. (It must be remembered that Job and his friends did not know what the author has told us in the Prologue, viz.: that his sufferings were a trial of his righteousness.) In his perplexity and distress he charges God with injustice, and is in danger of apostasy, but never wholly loses his faith in Him. The friends are silenced, but the enigma remains.

The Intervention of Elihu (32-37). A young bystander, dissatisfied alike with the three friends, who had seen in suffering nothing but the punishment of sin, and with Job, who had pronounced it an arbitrary affliction, now comes forward and gives the discussion a new turn by teaching that infliction has disciplinary value, that it is not merely punitive but curative.

The Interposition of Jehovah (38-42:6). God does not explain Job's calamities, or the mystery of the suffering of the righteous. He simply flushes all the channels of thought and life with a deeper sense of Himself. Under the flow of this fuller sense of God, perplexities disappear, just as rocks that raise an angry surf when the tide is low are covered and unknown when it is full. This is the meaning of God's manifestation to Job out of the storm. He brings Himself and His full glory near to Job, and fills his mind with such a sense of Him as he had never had before—"Now mine eye seeth Thee" (ch. 42:5). At this sight of God his heart not only quivers with an unspeakable joy, but he abhors his past thoughts of Him, and his former words, and repents in dust and ashes. (A. B. Davidson, *The Book of Job*).

This is effected by two discourses of incomparable grandeur and majesty, describing the wonders of creation

and the greatness of the Creator, showing that in the world of nature which he knows is the work of God's hands there are many mysteries he cannot solve, and that it is therefore folly to accuse God's providence because he cannot solve all the subtler mysteries of the moral world; and showing that the universe compels trust not only in God's power but also in His wisdom and love.

The Song of Songs

7. The title Song of Songs has superlative force, like "holy of holies" or "vanity of vanities," and means that this song is of supreme excellence. It is indeed an exquisitely beautiful idyll, but the interpretation of it is extremely difficult. Some regard it as an allegory, in which Solomon and the Shulamite represent Christ and the Church. The objection to this is that in every allegory or parable something is wrought into its texture to indicate unmistakably its allegorical design, (Ps. 80:9-17, Ezek. 17:3-10, Judg. 9:7-20), but there is no such indication in the Song of Songs.

Others say it is a mere collection of unrelated secular wedding songs. But the poem makes the impression of a continued dramatic idyll, a connected whole. Moreover, if the book is merely a collection of secular love songs it contains no ethical motive. Why should a congeries of such songs have a place in the sacred canon?

Perhaps the best view is that it depicts the victory of virtuous love over all temptations. A village girl in humble life, a vineyard keeper, the daughter of a widowed mother of Shulam or Shunem in the plain of Esdraelon, is betrothed to a young shepherd, a man of her own rank and worthy of her love. King Solomon on a spring visit to the country with his retinue passes her vineyard. Struck with her extraordinary beauty he conveys her to the royal

pavilion and with the aid of the court women endeavors to win her affections and make her a member of his harem—but in vain. She parries all his advances with praises of her absent lover. She longs for him by day, she dreams of him by night. Repeatedly the King presses his suit, but at last finding her as pure and steadfast as she is beautiful, he releases her. Hand in hand with her lover she returns to her home, where at the close of the poem she declares that love is born of God, a fire of Jehovah, and expresses in glowing words "the superiority of genuine, spontaneous affection over that which may be purchased by wealth or rank."

This view of course implies that the book was not written by Solomon, the superscription which attributes it to him being regarded as an addition without authority by some later hand, like the subscriptions to the New Testament Epistles.

On this view the ethical purpose of the book is plain. Solomon was the great polygamist of Israel. "He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines." And it is after he has formed his seraglio of a thousand idolatrous women, whose gods are worshipped with impure rites, that we read in Proverbs of the prevailing licentiousness in Jerusalem. That herd of strange women in the palace were the forerunners of other thousands on the streets. Surely the time was ripe for a rebuke of polygamy and for an exaltation of God's ideal of monogamy, and that is what we have, according to this view, in the Song of Songs. It is a condemnation of polygamy. It is a stainless poem in praise of virtue and the love of one man to one woman, according to God's ordinance. Marked with Oriental abandon and a luxuriance of highly sensuous imagery to which our western taste is not accustomed, yet it has not the vestige of a stain. It "extols the virtue

and unchangeable affection of a true woman when put to the severest test." For a class of adults therefore, in a time like ours, this book, especially in the more accurate and less indelicate Revised Version, has high teaching value.

Commentaries of A. Harper (Cambridge Bible for schools) and W. F. Adeney (Expositor's Bible).

Ecclesiastes.

The design of the book is to set before us the search for the Highest Good, the unsatisfying character of all merely earthly pursuits and possessions, and the satisfaction of the soul in the service of God.

QUESTIONS.

1. What is the chief characteristic of the form of Old Testament poetry? Name and define four species of Parallelism. What is the practical value of Parallelism to students of Scripture?

2. What kinds of poetry are found in the Old Testament? Is all of it religious? Name three early Hebrew lyrics of extraordinary power and beauty.

3. Describe the temperament, talents and training of the man who introduced the palmy period of Hebrew lyric poetry. What authors are named as contributors to the Book of Psalms?

4. How many psalms are there in the collection? Into what five parts is it divided? How is the close of each part marked? For what purpose were these parts originally compiled?

5. Why have the psalms played so great a part in the religious life of the world? Make a list of ten psalms that seem to you of pre-eminent excellence.

6. What book contains most of the gnomic poetry of the Old Testament? Mention some of the subjects of which it treats. Are its teachings purely prudential? What is the keynote?

7. What is the literary rank of the Book of Job? Is it literal history? What is its theme? How is it developed? State the general position of Job's friends. Of Elihu. How does God deal with the question?

8. What is the theme of the Song of Songs, according to the now generally accepted theory of interpretation? Is the theme worthy of a place in God's Book? Why was it specially timely then? Why is it specially timely now?

LESSON VI

The Old Testament for Little Children

1. No other book of the past makes so direct and effective appeal, and is so interesting, to children. Its story and its literature are adapted to them, and therefore offer a fertile field to the teacher of children. Much of it is written in the language of childhood. The words used are familiar. The sentences are brief and simple; indeed a complex sentence is almost foreign to the original text. Repetition of words and facts is a characteristic feature, Isaiah, describing this as the surest way to teach children of tender years: "Precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little" (28:9-13). Care is taken also to illustrate truth in terms of the every-day life of children.

Prominence of Children in the Narrative

2. It is not accidental, but providential, that much consideration is given to the home, and to the loving care of the children in it. The Bible is in large degree the annals of the child. The boyhood and home life of Isaac, of Esau and Jacob, and of Joseph, are drawn in pictures, which any child understands. The great Moses was once a helpless and endangered babe. Samuel, the leader of prophets, is best known for the revelation which God gave to him in childhood. David's boyhood is recorded in a way to charm every child who hears, and to make loyalty, true affection, courage and faith to be desired of all. The boy Daniel in a foreign land, lonely and tempted, but keeping heart true and unstained, finds ready and sympathetic response in every child's mind. These, and many other heroes of the Old Testament, are as well known for noble, God-fearing childhood as for heroic manhood.

Old Testament Stories for Little Children

3. Naturally the richest lesson field for little children will be the vivid and abundant stories. A little child in his early years is capable of knowing God as the heavenly Father. This means that this knowledge will become such a part of himself that he will come to associate God with his every-day life. The stories which show God's care and protection, so also teaching the child to love and trust God, will be the best spiritual food at this age.

(1) The Creation Story, while containing profound matter for mature minds, at the same time has many pictures for little children, such as the abundant food prepared for the man; the garden-home, fruits and flowers, gold and gems; the naming of the animals and their life close to man; and the heavenly Father coming to walk with Adam and Eve in the hours of the evenings.

(2) It is not necessary to leave the good lessons of Noah and the Ark altogether to the toy-makers. The teacher can tell to children the wonders of God's care in providing for the building of the great ship, His thought for the life of the animals, the wonder of the unceasing rain, the grateful love of the returning dove, the safe landing after the long, hard voyage, and that marvel of beauty to all children, the rainbow, with the Father's promise.

(3) The story of Moses presents the lesson of God's loving care for the helpless babe, in giving him a devoted mother, a loyal sister, and in guiding to the place, where the ark floated among the bullrushes, the only one who could save the little child's life, the princess herself. And his brave mother is given her reward, too, when she is called in to keep and care for her own babe.

(4) In the story of David there are parts to which children have rights; such as the keeping of his father's flocks,

when he protected them from the bear and the lion; the nights when he kept watch under the starry heavens, with his harp in hand, singing the goodness and the greatness of God, whose fingers made the moon and the stars (Psalm 8), and the kindness of God, his good shepherd (Psalm 23); and the visit of Samuel to Bethlehem, to anoint as the future king of Israel the ruddy-faced boy with the brave and singing heart, of whom none had thought so seriously, but whom God loved and watched over.

(5) Elijah was God's servant, and was sent on hard and dangerous service. But God always cared for, protected and fed him. In days of famine a home was found for him, and God provided food for him and for the widow and her son, to whose home he was sent. In the desert the ravens fed him, and at the end of his brave life God gave him a wonderful translation to the Home in Heaven.

(6) God's loving care for the boy Daniel, who was carried from a good home, and from all he loved, to a distant land, where dangers and temptations of every kind must be met, is to be used for little children. God protected him and made him great and good even in the land of strangers. God is everywhere, in Babylon as in Jerusalem, when His little ones need Him to keep and guide them.

(7) The illustrations just given above are chosen from the rich store of the Old Testament. Many others the teacher will find of equal simplicity and aptness. One other deserves notice: the story of the wilderness wanderings. In the land, without sowing and reaping, God gave His children manna day by day; He gave Moses power to open the rock that water might flow out for them; when serpents bit them, a remedy was provided in the brazen serpent; and if enemies attacked them, He saved them; even their clothes and shoes did not become old and worn.

Stories for Primary Grades

4. A little later, that is in the primary grades, there may be developed along with the thought of God's care and protection the additional thoughts of obedience to and service for this heavenly Father, and for Jesus Christ, the friend of children. Many of the stories already suggested for earlier years necessarily develop in this way.

(1) It was to be expected that Adam and Eve would obey the God and Father, who loved them and did all things needful for them. Noah's first act, after he left the ark, was to worship God, who had kept him and his loved ones safe. Daniel served and honored God through all his life, and brought others to know and trust Him.

(2) Especial attention may be given to Joseph's trust in God, and his faithful service. His trust kept him from discouragement in the lonely and hard days in Egypt. It did not make any difference where he was, a slave or in prison, or next to the throne, he kept his heart right, he was always busy at the work God gave him to do, he was helping and saving others. The secret of his life is given again and again in these words: "The Lord was with Joseph."

(3) Moses made full proof of his trust in and obedience to the God who took care of him. When he became a man he gave up all he might have become to serve God. Although there was danger of death before him, he went back to Egypt to save his people when God commanded him. At the crossing of the Red Sea and in all the dangers and needs of the desert he trusted and served God.

(4) The little Hebrew maid in the home of Naaman, had learned to love and serve God before she was carried away to be a slave in Syria. In the days when she served Naaman's wife she did not forget to serve God also, and told her Syrian lord how he might be healed of his leprosy by the prophet of the Lord of lords (II Kings 5).

(5) Samuel lived in the house of God and learned early to serve Him. He loved Eli, but he loved his heavenly Father more, and bravely bore to Eli the hard and bitter message which God told him he must carry.

These Stories True to Life

5. These stories are full of the realities of life. They are so written that children feel their reality and easily visualize the actual scenes. No child forgets them. There is another seldom used, and perhaps just as legitimate field of Old Testament story-telling: the unwritten stories, the reading between the lines, as for example the boyhood of Solomon; or Hannah at home thinking of and working for Samuel; and many others of which the Bible is suggestive.

Bible Poetry for Children

6. Other literature than the stories may be used in teaching little children about God's loving care. The 23rd Psalm has always been used effectively for this purpose. The 8th is suggestive of David's shepherd days, when he watched the flock by night, as when also the moon and the stars, which God ordained, were keeping their vigil. This Psalm tells of David's devotional life as a boy, of his love of nature, and his love for the Creator. The 84th Psalm tells of love for the Church in terms of the sparrow and the swallow, who have chosen the temple eaves and niches as their safe home. Psalm 103 sings the praise of God the heavenly Father for blessings, which every child understands. Here a father's love pictures the tenderness of the heavenly Father's love.

Flowers, Birds and Animals of the Bible

7. More than one hundred plants and flowers are mentioned in the Old Testament, from the old cedars of Lebanon to the hyssop growing in the crack of a wall. There is Jotham's story of the trees in Judges 9. There are many bird-neighbors who tell of God's kind care. An excellent illustration of Bible use of things near to a child's heart to teach lessons of trust and service is found in Proverbs 30:

"There are four things that are little upon the earth,
Yet they are exceeding wise;
The ants are a people not strong,
Yet they provide their food in summer;
The conies are but a feeble folk,
Yet make they their houses in rocks;
The locusts have no king,
Yet go they forth all of them by bands;
The spider taketh hold with her hands,
And is in king's palaces."

QUESTIONS AND SUMMARY

1. In what respects is the Old Testament made simple, that children may understand and love it?
2. Show its concern for the life and affairs of children.
3. What narratives seem especially designed for the instruction of children? Are they true to life? Are they vivid and impressive?
4. What parts of the poetry of the Old Testament may be used?
5. How can the Bible's use of nature be used at this age to teach children about God's love and care, and about trust and service?

LESSON VII

The Old Testament for Juniors

The Junior age is approximately from nine to twelve years. As the development of individuals varies, and exact lines cannot always be drawn between the characteristics of different ages, so some of the material of the preceding chapter may be applicable in this also. The Junior is fully capable of being taught to know, love and serve God as his heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ as Saviour and Friend. More definite direction also can be given for training for service.

Memory Work

1. Special emphasis should be put upon the *use of the memory.* At this age memory is usually at its highest efficiency, and this faculty should be put into service, in order that the treasures of Bible truth may be stored up for life-long possession; and that love for the great passages of the Bible may be developed. Children will prize more highly the riches of the Old Testament, if by memory they have acquired and laid them away; just as a person may esteem diamonds more, if he possesses them.

Many of the psalms, as for example the first, eighth, forty-sixth, and one hundred-and-third, will illustrate and emphasize instruction to be given at this age. Many of the Proverbs; verses from Job; brief selections from the Prophets, such as verses from Hosea 14, and parts of Isaiah Zechariah and Malachi, which contains well-known Messianic verses quoted in the New Testament should be learned by the Junior.

Old Testament History for Juniors

2. Abstractions are absent from the Old Testament, certainly from its narrative sections. There we see the reality and the activity of life in nature and in people. At the age when the pupil is keen to know the facts of the world and of life, certain phases of the history should be studied. The migration of Abraham; the birth, flight and call of Moses; some parts of Israel's wilderness wanderings; such as the march to and the stay at Sinai, and the journey around Edom; the history of Samuel; and sections from the history of the kings will teach their lessons of trust and of providential care.

Stories for This Period

3. In many of the stories of the Old Testament more of detail can be given than in the use of the same stories with little children. Abraham's generous separation from Lot, and his subsequent rescue of Lot from the Eastern kings, will present his unselfishness and faithfulness. The story of Joseph belongs in this period, in its entirety, showing his trust in God, and his courageous and cheerful service for others. Moses' rescue, his life at the royal court, and then his choice to leave all honors and wealth, in order to serve God and save his own people has its lessons for this period. The teacher can use the story of Gideon's brave and trustful life, who wonderfully saves his people from the Midianites; the early life of David as faithful shepherd, sweet singer and brave champion, in all which appear, his trust in God and love for Him; and for girls the obedience and ready wit of Miriam in the saving of Moses; and the many noble and loyal traits in Esther.

Heroes and the Heroic

4. In the Junior period the love of the heroic is developing, and there are many hero stories which will appeal to him, and will prove of great value at the time when he is learning to imitate persons, as well as acts.

(1) The story of David's victory over Goliath is an excellent illustration of the material which can be used at this age. The setting is fine for the purpose. The leaving of his home in Bethlehem, the arrival at the army camp, the insolence of the Philistine giant, and the distress and shame of Saul and his soldiers, prepare well for the brave and ready entrance of David on the deliverance of his people. The sensible choice of his weapon makes its appeal to a boy's heart, as does also the strong faith in his heavenly Father with which David went to the battle. There is also the note of unselfish service in David's offering his young life, begun with such promise, to serve God, and to save his people.

(2) Stories of Joshua fit into this period, such as the passage of the Jordan and the destruction of Jericho; his long and rapid march to relieve the Gibeonites, when he came suddenly upon the five Amorite kings at Bethhoron and won a great victory; and the heroic close of his life, when he calls all Israel to serve God.

(3) In the book of Judges the battles and victories of Deborah and Barak, of Gideon and of Jephthah will be found helpful. Jephthah is an inspiring character. Driven from his father's house by jealous brothers, he responded nevertheless to their appeal for help when the invading Ammonites threatened his people, and he saved them.

(4) This is the period for the lessons of Elijah's brave battle for faith in God, and his victory over the priests of Baal on Mt. Carmel. Alone he met all the champions of

the wicked Baal religion, and in his victory right, truth and purity were victorious over the false and base in Israel. The life stories of Joseph and Daniel also are lessons of faith in and love for God and the right. And in the stories of the battles and victories of these heroic men the moral values are always evident. They loved the truth; they trusted God; they dared and fought to help others. The heartless cruelties of the Philistines were brought to end by Samuel, Saul and David; and Joshua's victories drove much evil out of Palestine.

The Personal Element in the Narratives

5. Individuality has begun to manifest itself in the Junior period. The pronoun of the first person is used with insistence, and self is assertive. Much of the Old Testament story and history literature will meet well this phase of life. In the Bible the first personal pronoun is used too often to be listed in concordances. It is found on every page of history, prophecy and psalms. This strong and repeated emphasis on personality is one of the things that make the Bible a personal book for all time.

(1) For example, Joseph was much impressed with his own importance. He wore the princely robe, which indicated leadership in his father's house, when he went out to serve with his brothers with the flocks. His dreams were full of self-glory, the sheaves which he saw by day, and the stars above him at night, suggesting the figures for his dreams, in which he sees his parents and brothers doing homage to him. The tribulations of slavery in Egypt appear a necessary experience in reducing such self-assertion to unselfish and useful service.

(2) Somewhat differently Moses, Ruth and Esther teach the same lesson. They were strong personalities, and had much to gain and to hold for themselves. But

they gave all, and Moses and Esther even ventured life itself, to serve God and to help those who had need of them. Esther had every inducement to live in selfish ease, and to look after her own future; but she readily chose to sink herself in the welfare of her people. The story of Nehemiah, leaving his high and lucrative position at the court of the great king to defend and help his own nation in its perils, is a similar lesson of great value, from the later historical section of the Old Testament.

This pronounced "I" of the Old Testament will help to make the characters of its stories clearer to boys and girls of the Junior age, and to inculcate needed lessons of restrained pride and of unselfish service.

Nature Study

6. The birds and flowers of the Old Testament, some of which were studied in the Primary period, will afford more useful lessons to Juniors. The consideration given to them in the Law may be brought to their attention; for example, the protection of birds' nests, Deut. 22:6-7, Noah's sending out the raven and the dove from the ark; and the sparing of fruit trees, Deut. 20:19-20. The prophets use birds, animals and plants to serve as figures of God's care and goodness. Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah abound in such illustrations. The latter chapters of Job are full of nature illustrations of God's wisdom and care. And such Psalms as the 84th, 92d and 104th use the things of nature to teach of God and His goodness.

Love for the Church and the House of God

7. Stories of the Tabernacle and the Temple, for which abundant material will be found in Exodus and Numbers for the former, and in the books of Kings and Chronicles for

the latter, will teach the lessons of love and zeal for the Church. Samuel's home in his early life in the courts of the Tabernacle, David's desire to build a temple to be a worthy earthly house for the Lord of all the earth, and Josiah's good work in restoring and beautifying the neglected temple are excellent illustrations and appeals for the Juniors. The heroic efforts to rebuild the house of God, after the exile, against the bitter opposition of its enemies should not be forgotten. There is much of interest to be found in the building of the Tabernacle, and its uses and the meaning of some of its services.

The Use of Geography

8. At this period, when the sense of accuracy is keen, and the pupils are studying geography in the day schools, the service of Bible geography should not be neglected. Good maps should be at hand for every class, in order to visualize and fix in memory the lessons of the Book. The history is accurate, and often most suggestive, in its use of localities. The knowledge of the map will add pathos to the story of Joseph, the young prince, and heir of his father's house, who went out from Hebron, northward by Bethlehem, and Shechem to find his brothers at Dothan. Within a few days the Midianites came back over the same route, bearing him, a captive soon to be sold into slavery, by his father's door, which so recently he had left in pride of heart.

Punishment of disobedience and the sorrows of unbelief are eloquently taught in the chart of Israel's wanderings. They refused to go in at once from Kadesh on the South, the nearest way; they must pass through many years and hardships before they arrive at a possible point of entrance, on the eastern border. The story of the Judges cannot be properly told without locating by the map each enemy

invasion and the consequent place from which the deliverer arose.

For an illustration of the Bible use of geography let the teacher read Isa. 10:28:32, where the prophet vividly presents the victorious advance of the Assyrians on Jerusalem by their rapid occupation of one town after another, until the invader is before the city walls and "shakes his hand at the mountain of the daughter of Zion."

QUESTIONS AND SUMMARY

1. Select a list of suitable passages for memorizing from the Psalms, Proverbs, and the Prophets?
2. What historical material may be used in the Junior period?
3. In selecting Bible stories, what advance is made over those for little children?
4. Why are stories of the heroic to be chosen? Name some which are suitable for this purpose?
5. In what ways may the developing individualism of this period be met and helped by the Old Testament?
6. Are pupils of this period interested in nature study? Indicate points of Bible contact.
7. What stories can be used to foster love of and interest in the church?
8. What provision should be made in each class for the aid which the geography of the Bible will give to each lesson? In what ways may the knowledge of the map help?

LESSON VIII

The Old Testament for Intermediates and Seniors

Much of the material of the preceding chapter for Juniors might well be used for the earlier years of the above period, which approximately is from thirteen to eighteen. But there are certain advance steps which must be considered in the selection and presentation of material. Traits entirely different from those of earlier periods begin to be clearly marked. While memory is still quick, it begins to share its sceptre over the mind with the rising powers of reason. The love of the daring and heroic is present, but possibly accompanied by the increasing sense of the romantic. The social instinct asserts itself, and this is the age of the clan and the group. Individuality is still in evidence, but tends to identify itself with the welfare of the community and of the race.

In this period there is much day-dreaming. The soul is crowded with ideals. The 'teen-age is the time of nascent and aspiring generals, statesmen, authors and masters of finance. The growing lad is a factor, at least in vision, in the world of humanity; he has entered a higher realm of the ideal and the social. The instruction of this period must meet his new needs and ideals.

The Lessons from the Narrative

1. History, especially biography, forms a large part of the material for study in this period. The pupils of this period will turn naturally to history for their ideal heroes. But their sense of exactness is acute and effort must be made to maintain the reality of the persons and deeds of the his-

tory. Reality must not pass into eclipse behind the shadows of myth and allegory. Fortunately, the Old Testament narrative furnishes suitable material. It is life-like and vivid. Its characters have been so clearly depicted by the ancient narrators as to become well known personages and types to all the ages. Which of these may be used advantageously?

(1) Abraham left kindred, a home of comfort and personal advantage for homeless wanderings. His ambition was not for more flocks or fatter purse. He left all to save faith for all men and for all ages. He was heroic. His great sacrifice was crowned with victory; the three monotheistic religions of the world, Christianity, Judaism, Mohammedanism, go back to him as founder, calling him "Father Abraham," the father of faith. And so the story of his long and hard wanderings is full of meaning.

(2) The man Moses is of interest to those of earlier years, largely because of the charming story of his infancy. But the youth will care more for the heroism of patience, of unselfishness, and of loyalty to God which this strong, untiring, great-hearted man always displayed.

(3) Joshua's great achievements must be considered. His generalship in leading a host of untrained migrants against the seasoned armies of Canaan will be learned with admiration.

(4) The deeds of David in the years of his refugeeing from Saul (I Sam. 20-30), and the influence of those years in developing the great David of history, are good material for this period. They were decisive years in his life. In them are found stories of his justice and kindness to Saul; loyalty to his friends; readiness always to help the weak and needy; and his noble conduct among his own followers, as when he refused to drink the water brought at the peril of their lives from the old well of his childhood at Beth-

lehem. Here the greatness of the famous soldier is adorned by genuine godliness and a noble heart.

(5) The pure lives and brave deeds of Daniel and his three companions have a helpful message. With faith in God they kept themselves pure in a world of fascinating evil and mastered the hard and strange curriculum forced upon them in the schools of Babylon. Then after such equipment for life they never counted that life at its best dear to themselves if the keeping of it meant the loss of faith and virtue.

(6) The story of Esther finds a place in this period. The court of the mightiest sovereign of the time, the pomp of state parade, and the lavish wealth of royal entertainment make a stately and splendid setting for the story. In the center of such a stage appears the brave young queen, who thinks less of her royal state than of her people's need, and is more than ready to perish in the effort to save them. This gentle unselfishness of the most beautiful and exalted woman of her day has its lesson of the victory of faith over the allurement of the world.

The Ideal in the Old Testament Narrative

2. In the narratives given above the dramatic and realistic elements are apparent. These men and women appeal to youth as real and virile. But emphasis should be put on the high moral and spiritual ideals for which they strove, such as the unconquerable faith of Abraham in the true God, Moses' loyalty to his people and to God, the generosity and manliness of David, which made him so beloved, and Esther's brave gift of herself. The Old Testament teaches of the highest and holiest ideal ever cherished in the hearts of men, and of the struggles of that ideal against wrong and selfishness. This ideal is faith in the

loving and personal God and Father, and devotion to the purpose of making His name to be known and loved in all the earth. Devotion to this ideal made these Old Testament men and women heroic, and has made their lives full of meaning to those who are at the age when ideals are sought and cherished.

The Universal and the Human

3. The boys and girls of this period are world citizens. Their sympathies are expanding to embrace a kindred humanity, and features of Bible history and literature which have world relations will be of interest to them. Often those trained in our Sunday schools do not realize until after many years how other nations affected Israel, and how Israel influenced the world around it.

This need calls for the use of contemporary and comparative history. It may be quite feasible to link the interest in the secular history of the day school curriculum with the lessons of the Sunday school. Easy and interesting reference can be made to accessible books of history and to encyclopedias.

Egypt contributed to all subsequent civilizations, and the Hebrews were in close relations with Egypt for many centuries. Babylonia was a law-making country with a mind, if not a heart, for righteousness; and its laws affected the Old Testament life. Many of them were preserved in the statutes of Moses for the use of all nations, while the code of Hammurabi of Babylon has disappeared from the consideration of man.

Isaiah lived and preached after the founding of Rome, and when the dim light of their classic dawn was beginning to break over Asia Minor and Greece. Events recorded in the books of Daniel, Haggai and Zechariah occurred when Greece was in the morning of her glory; and its midday

splendor was contemporary with Ezra and Nehemiah. The Old Testament passes through the great civilizations of antiquity, influenced by them and influencing them; it brings down to us their scenes and lessons with more reality than do the chiseled stone or the burnt clay tablet.

Memory Work

4. The memorizing of great passages of Old Testament literature, which began in the earlier grades, should be continued in the Intermediate years. Many Psalms which have close connection with the history, as the 46th, possibly referring to the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib, and others for their inherent beauty, such as the 103rd, or the 24th, should be taken into the mind and heart. There are familiar and famous passages in the historical books, such as the words of Ruth's choice, and many verses in the Prophets, which may well be mastered in connection with other lessons of this period.

The Social Element

5. The social and community interests of this adolescent period can find points of contact and instruction in the Law and the Prophets. The Ten Commandments and the Book of the Covenant (Ex. 20-23) should be read and studied with this in view. The book of Deuteronomy has many suitable lessons. It is a book of social righteousness on the foundation of human brotherhood, which in turn rests on the fatherhood of God. Such chapters as 15 and 20-26 defend the rights of men, require clean living by the individual for the good of the community, encourage kindliness, helpfulness and justice, and in brief teach the duty of brotherliness.

There are passages of the same kind in the Prophets. Such may be chosen as Amos 2:6-8; 6:1-6; 8:4-10; Isa. 3:1-15; 5:8-23; Micah 6:6-16, denouncing fraud and oppression and requiring truth and righteousness. The social ideals of the prophets are faith in God, our Father, and love and justice for our brothers, who are God's children.

In the narrative sections there are stories which can be used to teach justice and social service—Ahab and Naboth's vineyard (I Kings 21), and Gehazi's greed and lying are examples of stories which may be chosen. David and Uriah, with the parable of Nathan (II Sam. 11 and 12) is another story with its lesson of right relations to our fellowman.

QUESTIONS AND SUMMARY

1. What advance is there in this period over the needs and capacity of the Junior period? What changes in the material used are necessary?

2. What lessons are to be sought and applied from the narratives and stories? In addition to those suggested above, select for yourself others which present the reality and the dramatic vividness of Old Testament heroes.

3. What ideals are found in these narratives, which appeal to pupils of this age?

4. How may the growing consciousness of brotherhood and of universal sympathy be met?

5. How should the memory be put to service? Select for yourself classic passages from history, psalms and prophecy.

6. Is this not an age in which fairness, justice and helpfulness are admired and practised? Suggest great messages of the Old Testament on social justice and service of which the pupil should be put in possession.

LESSON IX

The Old Testament for Young People

The transition from the age just considered to the period described as "for Young People" is often fatal to Sunday-school attendance. Entrance upon college years, or launching out into business or industrial life after high school graduation, creates a new situation, which is not always met successfully. This has been called the critical period of the Sunday school. Such danger calls for the greatest concern for the attractiveness of Bible study, and its fitness to satisfy the new spiritual needs.

Characteristic of this period is an idealism, which is glowing and enthusiastic, but begins to realize itself in practical ways, and to take on systematic forms. Views of life are crystalizing into character and achievement between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. Moral values are clearer and pronounced. The social impulse is strong. The devotional element in life is much in evidence, and demands cultivation. This is the age when leadership begins to assert itself; therefore training for leadership must be provided. It is also the period of missionary enthusiasm and purpose. We must consider the material and method for strengthening and directing these characteristics.

Sequence and Purpose in the Narratives

1. The Old Testament cannot be treated in this period as a collection of fragments without logical relation. Its parts have been arranged into a connected narrative, which has its evident purpose. Nor is it merely the history of a

people; it is a people's history with a purpose. In a sense, it is God's history; that is, it is the revelation in successive stages of His benevolent purpose and His wise dealings with men. Its parts are bound together with the thread of this purpose. In teaching young people, the unity and continuity of the narrative must be maintained. The following suggestions may be followed:

(1) The book of Genesis and the early chapters of Exodus are introductory to the solemn scene at Sinai, recorded in Ex. 19, which is a central chapter in the Old Testament. The following chapters (20-23) present in the Decalogue and the short code of laws, called the Book of the Covenant, the articles of agreement by which Israel is set apart to be the servant of Jehovah, and he becomes in a peculiar sense the God of Israel, a relation known as the Covenant. Back to this relation all the prophets turned, under the figure of marriage, and the breaking of it by Israel they called spiritual adultery.

(2) There must be a home for the fellowship of these two parties in Covenant: the second part of Exodus and Leviticus tell of the erection, appointments and ceremonies of the Tabernacle. Numbers records the early experiences under the Covenant relationship during the wilderness wanderings, and the testing and supplementing of the Law, when put into operation. Deuteronomy is a fitting climax to this group of books, in which the great leader Moses, about to hand over the leadership to Joshua makes an eloquent farewell appeal to the people to remain loyal to the Lord their God.

Unity and design can also be traced through the other historical books, and this fact, with its appeal to young people's love of logic and consistency may be used to good effect in teaching them.

The Literary Excellence of the Old Testament

2. The Old Testament is the best of literature. Its varied and incomparable beauties deserve presentation to young people at the age of enthusiastic idealism, when great literature is read and loved. God made the world around us beautiful; it also pleased Him to reveal Himself in a book adorned with grace and beauty. The historical books present many passages of descriptive and dramatic power.

The prophets especially have produced many famous specimens of literature. One of these is the description by Amos, in his sixth chapter, of national pride, individual greed and religious indifference. He denounces those who are at ease in Zion, stretch themselves on beds of ivory, sing idle songs, drink wine out of bowls, but are not grieved for the nation's doom, which is swiftly rushing upon them. Isaiah often sang the praises of the promised redemption in beautiful nature symbols, as in chapters 35 and 55, which deserve a place in every one's memory. A fine pen-picture is Ezekiel's description of haughty, busy, swindling Tyre, the robber and corrupter of the whole earth (chaps. 27 and 28).

The book of Psalms contains masterpieces of imagination and expression, such as the Lyric of Creation, 104; the song of the sanctuary, 84; the grandeur and grace of Divine revelation, 19; and many others. It will delight any young mind to read Psalm 65, in which David bands together orchard, field, hill-slope and valley, dew and rain, morning and evening, flocks and harvests, into orchestra and chorus, to render an oratorio of the Divine goodness. This psalm and others, and also other parts of Hebrew literature have furnished text and inspiration for some of the world's greatest music.

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The Old Testament Romances

3. This is the period of romance; it will be of interest to young people, and may prove another bond to hold their hearts to the Bible, to know that it touches so intimately all the phases of our common, everyday life, and is sympathetic toward their personal affections and attachments. The Old Testament has its love stories, which are among the most beautiful and the most ideal in all literature. They make love and marriage holy.

The romance of Boaz and Ruth is unexcelled for riches of sentiment and for beauty of expression by any other story. The beauty of Ruth, her love for the God of Israel, whom she learned to know through the lives and witness of His people, her industry, her purity of heart, the manliness and generosity of Boaz, the sustained interest throughout the story, and the touches of quaint beauty which the life and customs of old Bethlehem give, have made it the best known and loved of short stories.

In the 24th chapter of Genesis will be found another love story of such beauty and true religious sentiment, that it is held up for consideration and emulation in the form for marriage in the Liturgy of one of the churches. In this love story of Isaac and Rebecca we read of faith in God's sovereign and gracious providence, His wise direction of our daily life, and his interest in our hearts and homes. So God's Word remembers our human hearts, and weaves threads of romance into chronicles of fields and firesides, as well as of thrones and kingdoms.

The Highest Motives for Service

4. The higher moral and spiritual values of the Old Testament must be presented to young people, who are at the age to appreciate and covet these values. This may

be done by contrasts, which are frequently used in the Bible, in order to set forth clearly the lessons of its characters.

(1) Moses and Balaam are such characters in contrast. The latter was a prophet for gain only, disobeying the will of God, although he well knew it, for greed of gold; while Moses, the true servant of God, made the higher choice, choosing rather to share ill treatment with God's people than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.

(2) Saul and David represent the opposites of selfish ambition and of unselfish devotion to the cause of God and His people, a contrast of false and real kingliness.

(3) Ahab the king betrayed the cause of the God of Israel to the corrupt and fanatical followers of pagan gods, while Elijah the prophet gave his all, even risking life, for Jehovah, the true and only God. One brought evil into the nation, the other labored to remove it. Ahab perished, Elijah and his work live forever.

(4) It would have been better for Esther to die in the effort to save her people, than to live in the shame of having forsaken them. Here is an inspiring lesson of religious heroism for young people just entering upon life's work.

(5) And so it will be found that the Bible is true, not merely as recording the struggles of a nation; but true in a higher sense of the struggles and victories of the individual soul. Bible characters are so real and human, we see ourselves in them, and learn our lessons for life from them. An intelligent Christian recently remarked: "I wish ministers in their preaching would use Old Testament characters oftener, for through them we learn best the Old Testament message for us."

The Messianic Message

5. In all the history of the Old Testament people God is interested in them, and takes part in all their struggles. In danger and despair He heartens them with the promise of coming deliverance. In the fulness of time He Himself will send a deliverer. The coming may seem delayed; but it will surely be. This is the Messianic message, the scarlet thread of redemption, which runs throughout the Old Testament, binding its parts and ages together. This should be traced from the early promises of Genesis (3:15; 12:2; 49:10, etc.) throughout to the specific declarations of later prophecy (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; 53; Micah 5:2; Zech. 9:9; Mal. 3:1, etc.). It will be interesting and helpful to show how in each age the Promise takes on itself the needs, and appears in the forms, of that age.

Mission Study

6. The missionary spirit of young people should be considered. There are many references to the worldwide kingdom of the Messiah, and God's desire that all nations come to Him, such as, for example Ps. 72, 96-98, 100; Isa. 49; 55 and 60; and the book of Jonah. There are many other passages which may be used; indeed the Messianic message almost invariably involves other nations, and so fosters the missionary spirit.

Prophecy and Poetry in Their Place in the Narrative

7. In this period there should be comparative study of the history and the other literature, which is often a part of, or helpful interpretation of, the history. This is necessary to a comprehensive knowledge of the growth of the

Divine revelation in the Old Testament. The book of Isaiah and some of the Psalms of that period (e. g. 46) will be understood better if studied in connection with that period. Four of Isaiah's chapters (36-39) are repeated in II Kings. Jeremiah's prophecies are a necessary part of Judah's history in the last half-century before the fall and exile of the nation. Whenever possible, the literature should be studied in its place in the nation's history, to illuminate the history, and in turn to gain interest for itself.

QUESTIONS AND SUMMARY

(1) Get clearly in mind the characteristics of the Young People's period.

(2) How may the sequence and purpose of the narrative be presented? Apply this in the Pentateuch and historical books.

(3) Can the literary excellence of the Old Testament be used to stimulate interest in the Old Testament? Select other passages than those given to illustrate this.

(4) How does the Old Testament meet the love of romance found in this period?

(5) In what way, given above, are the higher motives for service appealed to?

(6) What is the Messianic message of the Old Testament? Have you ever tried to trace its development?

(7) What is the Old Testament missionary message?

(8) What is meant by the comparative study of the narratives and prophecy and poetry? What are its advantages?

LESSON X

The Old Testament for Adults

Older people do not come to the Sunday School indifferently, nor from compulsion, but in seriousness of mind and with definite purpose. They are facing the vexing problems of life, and come seeking light and guidance. They are soul-hungry for truth, righteousness and peace.

The Beauties and Attractions of the Bible

1. As in the instruction of young people, so in the Adult Bible Class the literary charm and the marvels of the Bible should be given emphasis. The book of Isaiah should be studied carefully as one of the masterpieces of literature. Its chief claim upon us, certainly, is its spiritual and Messianic Message; but that message is given in words and figures of rare beauty. The immortal Immanuel passages are given in settings of rich rhetorical beauty: Galilee of the nations, walking in darkness, to have the glorious light of the Divine Son; when the families of the nation had been cut down by the Assyrian as a leveled forest, a sprout was to go forth from the stump of Jesse; in times of injustice Immanuel would be a king in righteousness, and as streams of water in a dry place, and the shade of a great rock in weary land. The figures of shepherd, mountains, islands, heavens in the fortieth chapter are unsurpassed for beauty in all literature.

And what has been said of Isaiah is true of all the prophets, some of the gems from their books having been referred to in preceding chapters. The book of Ruth is rich in sentiment and in quaint, beautiful scenes from

Judean country life. The wit of Samson, the motherly patriotism of Deborah, the odd graces of provincial Gideon, and the robust faith of Jephthah are drawn in clear, striking lines. Another of the treasure-caskets of the Old Testament to be opened is the book of Psalms, the Songbook of a nation, growing into its present form with the growing needs of the nation, with consideration of the light it throws on the moral and spiritual history of Israel, in addition to beauty of thought and expression.

The Problems of Daily Life

2. After the enthusiasm of youth and the buoyancy of faith are somewhat spent, there is danger that the sober consciousness of maturity may lapse into pessimism or agnosticism. Problems, which often seem insoluble, press upon the soul, and bring it to face new crises. The Adult Class teacher may help the storm-tossed to weather the storm. One of those problems is the *origin of the world* and of life; are these just the creatures of chance, and are we the pawns of fate; how can the tangle of existence be explained? The Bible has an answer in its story of creation and its teaching of Divine Providence; God made the heaven and the earth, and all things work together for good to them that love Him.

Sin is another of the mysteries; how did it originate, what is its nature, and what is the remedy for sin? The early chapters of Genesis give the soundest explanation of its origin and of its rapid growth; the Bible is full of warnings against it and of its many marked characteristics; and best of all the way to forgiveness and healing is set forth. The real problem is how to be saved from sin; and with it the Bible deals effectively. The whole history of Israel is a sermon on sin.

Sorrow and all the problems of trial are considered, and many of them are met in a satisfactory way. The book of Job is given to the working out of this problem; and many psalms center around it, such as the thirty-ninth, seventy-third and thirty-seventh. Throughout the Old Testament runs the idea that righteousness is more than success. The inequalities of life are themes for wise and confident conclusions in many of the psalms (see **49** and **37**), in the Proverbs and in the prophets; "Better is little, with the fear of Jehovah, than great treasures and trouble therewith." Personal problems also are considered, such as the *meaning of death*, and the question of *immortality*.

A Book of Sound Philosophy

3. We find in the Old Testament an interesting and practical psychology. The vital organs of the body are regarded as the seats of the various moral and spiritual faculties, pity in the bowels, will in the kidneys, strength in the loins, and most suggestive of all intelligence and morality in the heart. The head is not considered, as with the Greeks, to be the center of our being; but this place of honor is assigned always to the heart: "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

The central philosophical, or doctrinal, principle of the Old Testament is the *existence of God*. That is the starting-point for all moral and intellectual considerations. God does not need to be proved; He is. Every philosophy must have its fundamental assumption; none could be sounder than that of the Old Testament: "God."

Its doctrine of *sin* is both simple and profound. The third and fourth chapters of Genesis tell of the beginning and rapid development of sin. It begins in doubt of God, in unbelief; and in the sixth chapter has spread through

the race, and the flood of great waters is necessary to cleanse the earth. A prophet's view of sin is often just the opposite of his idea of God. As Hosea teaches that God is love, so sin is ingratitude and rejection of His love.

The Old Testament view of *Nature* is striking. The immediate presence of God in nature is assumed. He makes the sun to rise; He gives the rain in its season; the wind is His messenger; as a shepherd leads forth his flock, so He leads forth the stars of the heaven, and calls them by name. The miracle in the Old Testament is not unnatural, but the expected and natural expression of Him who fills nature with His presence.

The doctrine of *immortality* is presented with striking clearness and force. It is guaranteed by friendship and fellowship with God here; in death He will not leave His friend to see destruction (Ps. 16). In Job and in Psalm 73 immortality is grasped by faith because of the inequalities and injustice of life. It must be that after death these unjust conditions will be rectified. The Bible Philosophy is moral; righteousness is one of the ringing notes: "to depart from evil" is understanding.

The Social Teaching of the Old Testament

4. Two sections of the Old Testament are of especial value in the study of social problems and their relation to our life: the Law and the Prophets. The provisions of the Mosaic Law are always humane; they imply the relations of brothers between man and man. Already in the Book of the Covenant (Ex. 21-23) the rights of the weak, of slaves and of strangers are safeguarded.

The Book of Deuteronomy is an ideal social code; the principles upon which all social relations are based are faith in the Holy God as a father, and love for our fellow-

man as a brother. The poor will have provision made for them, and the rights of enemies and strangers are safeguarded.

The messages of the prophets are full of social teachings. Judges who take bribes, princes and rulers who oppress and domineer, are denounced. They are faithless shepherds. Faith in God is the principle and obligation for faithful service to fellowmen. Isaiah, Hosea, Amos and Micah are especially eloquent and insistent in their call for honesty, righteousness and equity. Robbery and oppression are high-handed sins against God, whose children the poor and weak are. Mankind is a family; therefore wrangling is a sin against the members of one household.

The Messianic Message

5. This is constant and unmistakable. The light which envelopes and makes clear to us the beauty of the Old Testament is the shining presence of the Son of God. Throughout its books the Messianic hope appears as the scepter, star, sun, prophet, priest, king, atoning Servant of Jehovah. The teacher can point out the general and somewhat indefinite references in the early books; the fine use made of the kingdom and its king to show the clearer and more definite Messianic conception; and the strong faith of some of the psalms, such as the second and seventy-second, in the Messianic deliverance.

The book of Isaiah is often quoted by the New Testament as prophetic of the Christ. The passages of Immanuel and of the Servant of Jehovah should be studied in detail, in their relation to each other, and in their development toward the conception of a personal Messiah. The last chapters of the prophets Zechariah and Malachi are full of personal prophecies. Mark begins the Gospel of Christ where Malachi left off.

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This phase of Old Testament teaching should enter into every grade; but its development toward a definite event and an all-glorious Person, wherever passages of the New Testament refer to the Messianic messages of the Old is the opportunity of the Adult class. Especially should the New Testament quotations be laid side by side with their Old Testament originals. Then it will be evident how fitly Philip, "beginning at this Scripture" (Isa. 53), could preach Jesus to the Ethiopian, and how it was Paul's custom to reason from the Scriptures about the sufferings and resurrection of the Christ.

There are many ways in which the adult class may learn from the Old Testament; such as the study book by book, the messages of the prophets in detail, or the following of great doctrines through its pages.

SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS

(1) The ways in which the Old Testament as great literature can be presented to the adult classes.

(2) When life begins to take on more serious nature, and to bring its daily problems, the Old Testament is a friend in need. Its men and women also met these problems.

(3) The doctrines and philosophy are both interesting and dependable. How are its teachings about God and sin related?

(4) The prophets especially, and also the Law, have a social message for the needs of communities and individuals of our day.

(5) The heart of the Old Testament is the Messiah. Follow the development from the early life of man to the personal prophecies of later books. Show how the national hope took on the forms, and spoke through the figures, of each age.

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